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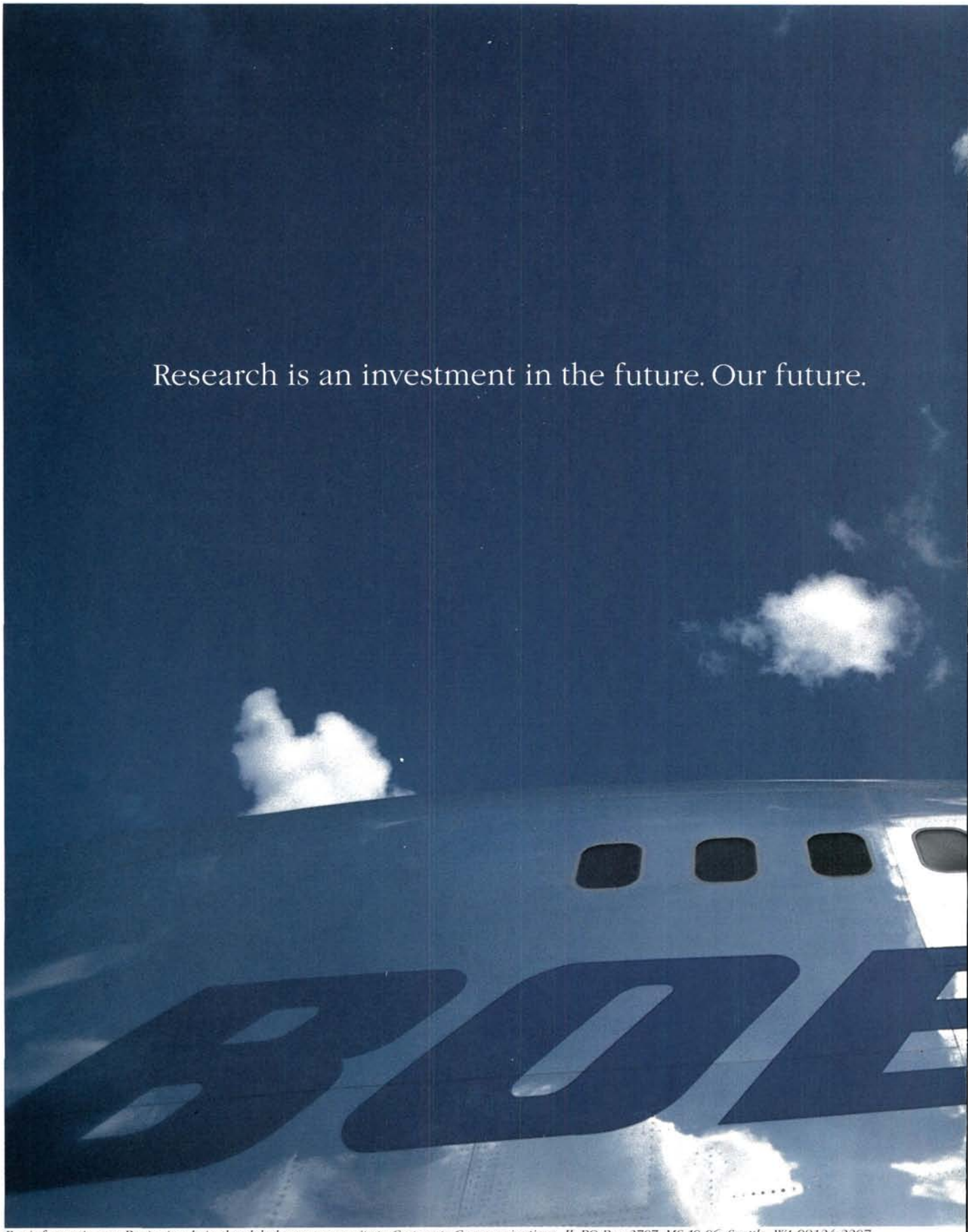

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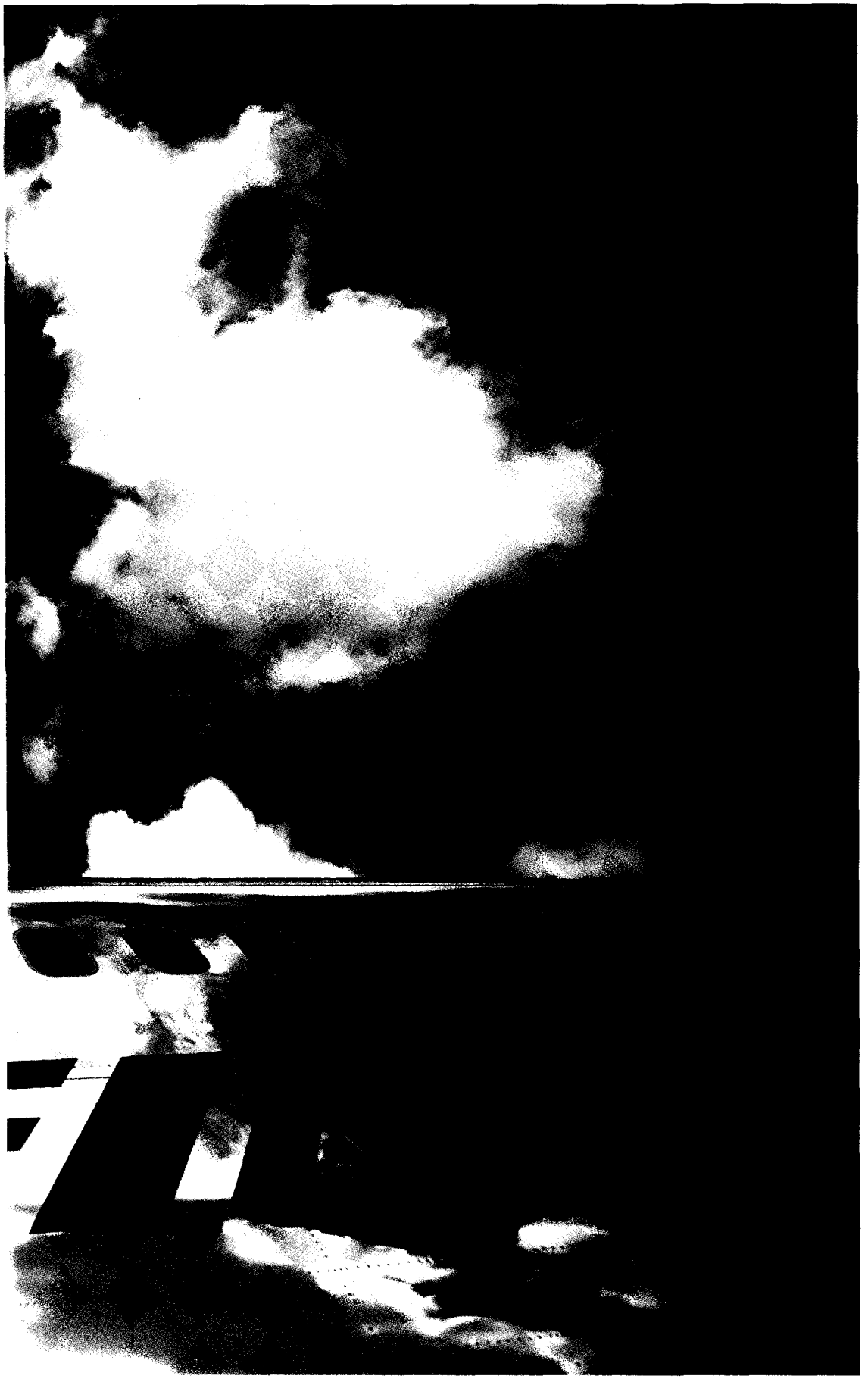

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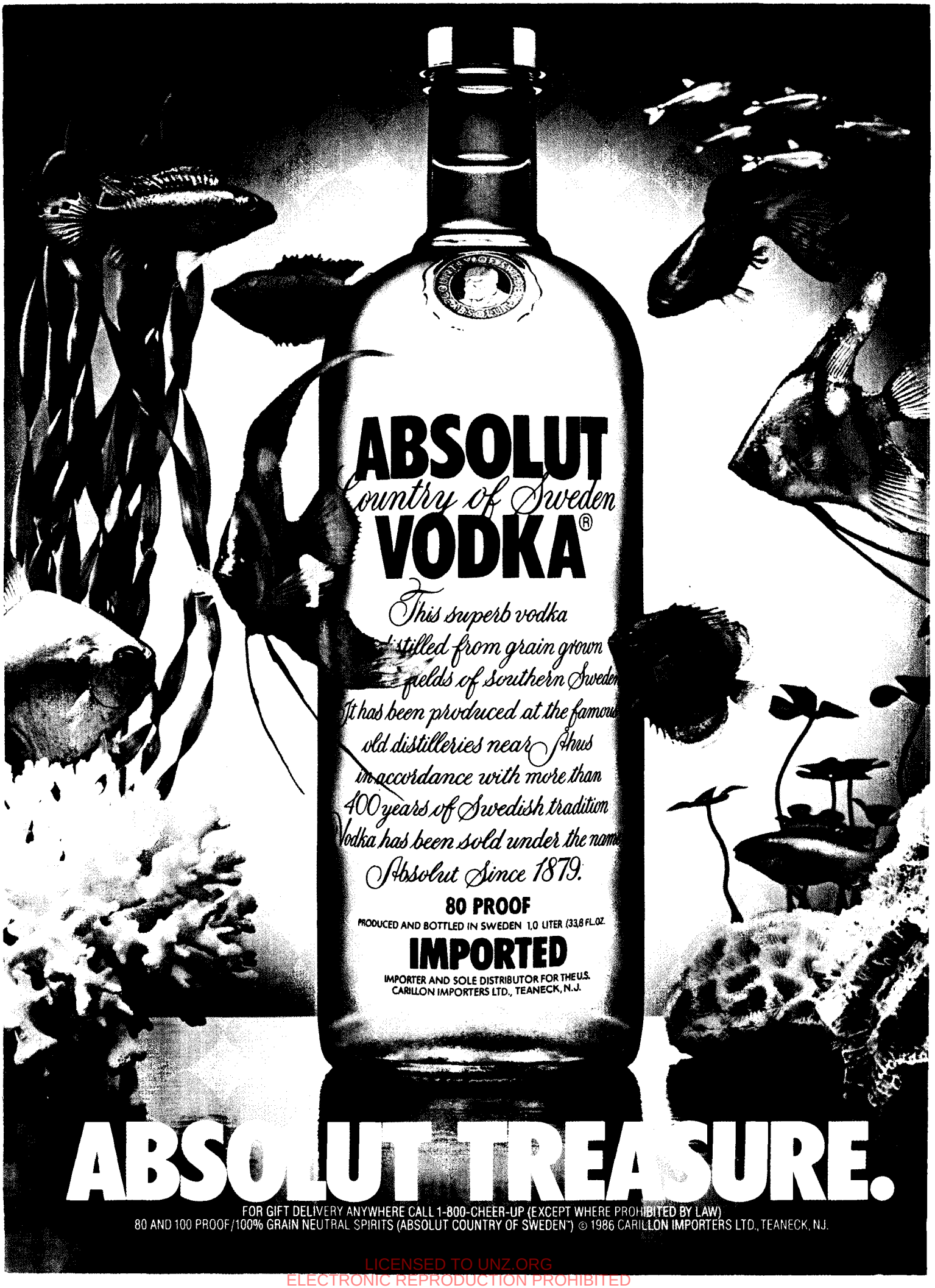
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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FEBRUARY 1, 1993

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CORRESPONDENCE

Trading shots

To the editors:

One expects more from THE NEW REPUBLIC than the cheap shots aimed at former International Trade Commission chair Paula Stern in John B. Judis's attack on her as a possible top Clinton international trade appointment ("Trader," December 21). As *The Wall Street Journal* has reported, Stern is the target of a massive propaganda campaign mounted by industries traditionally inclined toward protectionist policies, including steel and textiles, and the law firms that represent them. Their assaults on Stern, the *Journal* reported, have become so "nasty," that they "have even resorted to the trade world's equivalent of red-baiting." Judis's piece is a crude example of the tactic, starting with the unsubtle pun in the title.

Typical is Judis's effort to paint Stern as an enemy of the American national interest for "taking the side of Hitachi, Sharp and other Japanese goliaths" as an expert witness in the recent high-profile anti-dumping case filed by seven "small start-up firms" attempting to manufacture flat-panel liquid crystal display (LCD) screens used in laptop computers. Invoking the president-elect himself, Judis adds that the complainants are the sorts of firms on which Clinton has "repeatedly" stated that "American industry has depended ... for technological innovation."

What Judis does not mention is that Stern was joined in her opposition to the start-up LCD manufacturers' plea for protection by virtually the entire U.S. computer industry, including Apple Computer, IBM, Compaq, AT&T, and others. They joined Stern in pointing out that if high anti-dumping duties were imposed on imported LCD screens, the computer firms would be forced to move their laptop manufacturing offshore to avoid the duties—or be priced out of the burgeoning worldwide laptop computer market. Indeed, when the ITC nevertheless imposed such duties, a computer executive was quoted in—of all places—THE NEW REPUBLIC ("Toxic Dumping" by James Bovard, December 9, 1991), to the effect that the decision was "an eviction notice from the U.S. government to the fastest growing part of the computer industry." Bovard called the flat-panel decision "a disaster for American competitiveness," adding $1,100 to the price of laptops manufactured in the United States and sending "thousands of American jobs" offshore.

So who are the unpatriotic "traders" in this scene? Are they Paula Stern, the U.S. computer systems industry and James Bovard? Or are they the LCD firms, their lawyers and journalistic fellow travelers like Judis, who seek to manipulate U.S. government policy and public opinion to promote parochial private interests at the expense of the national interest?

SIMON LAZARUS
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

At the dawn of the Bush administration, TNR ran a series of kinder, gentler profiles of "people we like." The only ones I remember were the mash notes to Tom Foley (published a few months before the magazine wrote him off as a wet sponge) and my former governor, "Saint Buddy" Roemer, whose incompetence and cowardice helped briefly to make a contender of David Duke. Now TNR celebrates Clinton's victory with "The Hit List," a series of brief attacks on "people we believe Clinton should not appoint to his administration." There will be those who will bemoan the negativity in this. I'm just glad you've finally figured out where your talents lie.

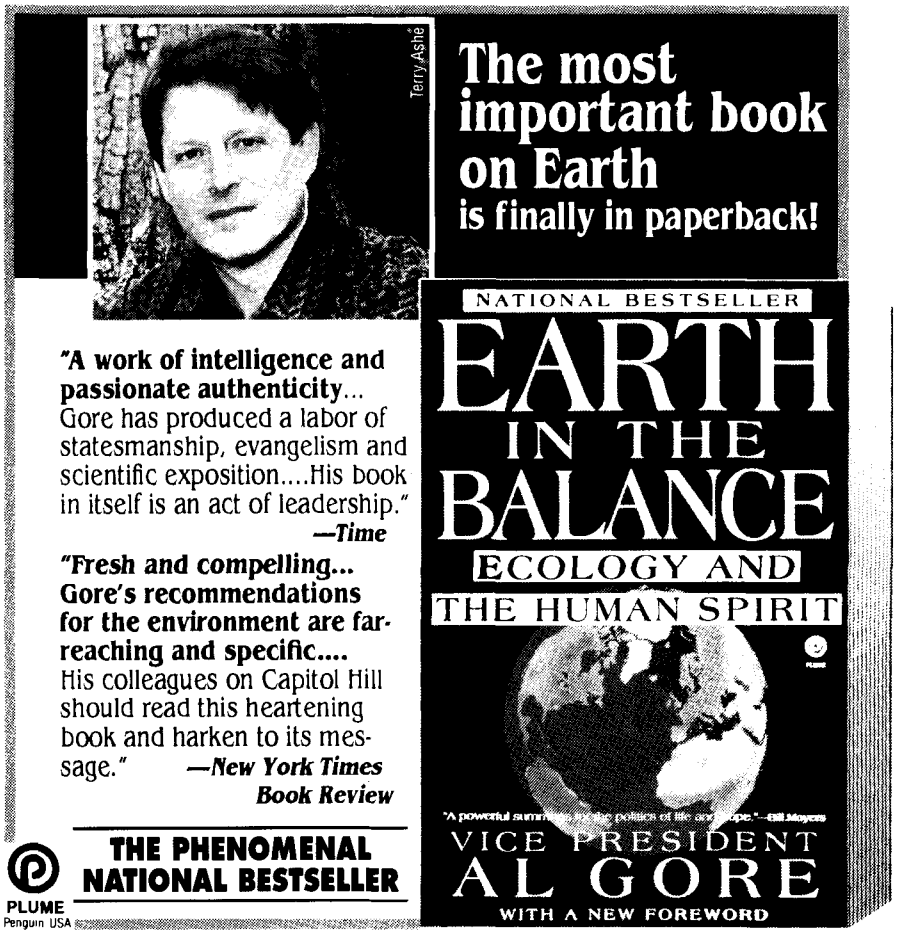
PHILIP NUGENT
New Orleans, Louisiana

Politics of choice

To the editors:

After being encouraged by Nat Hentoff's article explaining the liberal case against abortion, my hopes for meaningful dialogue on the subject within TNR were dashed by Michael Kinsley's "Between Bork and Roe" (TRB, December 7). His use of the "anti-choice" label is appalling: Only by twisted reasoning of the sort Kinsley usually detests can "choice" be seen as the issue.

We can assign other people's behavior to one of three categories: those we approve of, those we do not approve of but believe others should have the opportunity to practice if they believe otherwise, and those we believe are so abhorrent that they should not be practiced by anyone, regardless of their beliefs. What one considers to be most offensive lands in category three. "Pro-choicers" put abortion into the second category, while "pro-lifers" place it in the third. The issue is not choice, but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the seriousness we assign to taking the life of an unborn child. Are we "anti-choice" when we outlaw drug use, or child abuse? We simply believe that as a community we have an interest in preventing these behaviors.

As Hentoff indicated, liberals have traditionally protected society's weakest members, and it is in this tradition that many of us oppose abortion. Do not stereotype those who disagree with you, Kinsley, and we will not stereotype you.

JAMES W. DEAN JR.
Cincinnati, Ohio

Malcolm as Job

To the editors:

I didn't grasp Shelby Steele's charge that Malcolm X "made a big deal out of facing off with Elijah Muhammad, whom he had likely propped up for the purpose," until Steele staged his fine example of such an ambush ("Malcolm Little," December 21). Steele's chosen prop, though, has already been assassinated once. Steele confuses betrayal ("once Malcolm learned from these people, faiths and ideologies—or had taken what he could from them—he betrayed them all, one after another") with growth. He applauds Malcolm as "conservative through and through," only to dismiss him for moving beyond dead-end ideology. Steele should pick up fellow conservative William Safire's new book, *The First Dissident*, for a revelation about the loyalty he doesn't see in Malcolm's life: "The first loyalty—ahead of God, country, family—is to your own integrity, to your sense of what you fiercely believe to be right." Safire finds, in First Dissident Job, "the stubborn loyalty to his own integrity we call self-respect." Steele looks at Malcolm and sees Judas; I see Job.

DAVID BILLINGS
Alger, Washington

Restore credit

To the editors:

Despite your overt approval of Operation Restore Hope, you refuse to give credit where it is due—namely to George Bush ("Into Africa," December 28). In fact, you wind up insulting the president (e.g., his alleged "feebleness"). Ironically, it is Bush's inherent morality, goodness and determination that is the sole reason the United States is involved in Somalia. No other government official has sufficient power to make the decision to commence such an action. But after reading the editorial, one might think the president had virtually nothing to do with the operation. You should learn a lesson from the president's expression of dignity and humanity, and have the decency to give President Bush the credit he deserves, instead of calling him names and giving him a boot in the pants as he is walking out the door.

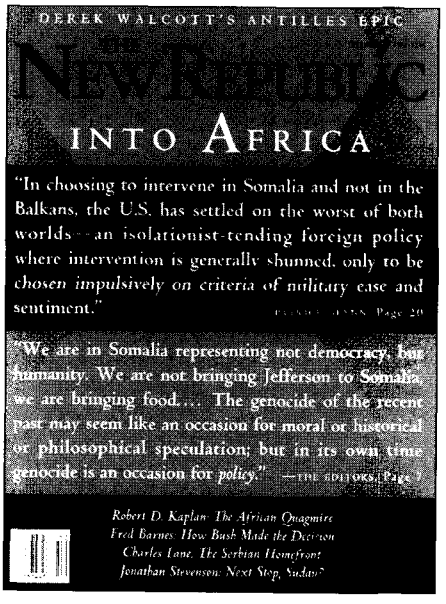
JOEL R. BURCAT
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Unhyped

To the editors:

As the present superintendent of Community School District 4 in East Harlem, I am compelled to respond to Billy Tashman's article "Hyping District 4" (December 7).

Tashman took several liberties with factual evidence of District 4's success.


DEREK WALCOTT'S ANTILLES EPIC
THE NEW REPUBLIC
INTO AFRICA
"In choosing to intervene in Somalia and not in the Balkans, the U.S. has settled on the worst of both worlds—an isolationist-tending foreign policy where intervention is generally shunned, only to be chosen impulsively on criteria of military ease and sentiment."
"We are in Somalia representing not democracy, but humanity. We are not bringing Jefferson to Somalia, we are bringing food.... The genocide of the recent past may seem like an occasion for moral or historical or philosophical speculation; but in its own time genocide is an occasion for policy." —THE EDITORS, Page 7
Robert D. Kaplan: The African Quagmire
Fred Barnes: How Bush Made the Decision
Charles Lane: The Serbian Homefront
Jonathan Stevenson: Next Stop, Sudan?

He implied that the district's minority students are incapable of achievement, since he attributes the "district's meager" success in student achievement to the importation of non-minority students.

According to the New York City Central Board of Education's published statistics, only 15.9 percent of District 4's students in 1979 were reading at or above grade level, ranking 32nd out of thirty-two districts citywide. In 1986, the district ranked 17th citywide, with 63.4 percent of the students reading at or above grade level. Since that time our reading level rank has fluctuated between 17th and 20th. With the renorming of the Degrees of Reading Power test in 1989, not only did District 4 drop from 63.6 percent to 41.5 percent, but the citywide average declined from 68.1 percent to 47.8 percent.

New York City Data Profiles of District 4 contradict Tashman's claims that achievement could be attributed to non-minority students. The pupil ethnic/racial statistics have been relatively stable over the last twelve years and indicate an average 3.3 percent enrollment of non-minority students in the district. Citywide Chapter I statistics, which reflect the percentage of students on register who fall below the poverty level, indicate that eighteen out of twenty school buildings in the district have 75 percent or more of their students below the poverty level, including the school that houses Deborah Meier's Central Park East Secondary School.

References made to district expenditure of funds fail to recognize that for the last four years the district has operated within budget and the alternative schools have maintained program quality under the direction of John Falco. Clearly Tashman has not bothered to verify his data. If he had, he would have noted that eighth-graders do take a New York state competency test in writing, and that in the 1988-89 school year 84.6 percent of eighth-graders in the district met the state standard with a passing score of 65.

MARCELINO RODRIGUEZ
Superintendent,
Community School District 4
New York, New York

Billy Tashman replies:

That Marcelino Rodriguez not only defends District 4's 20th place ranking (it's actually 22nd) in reading scores—an unreliable gauge of reading progress to begin with—but also ignores that the district ranks near the bottom in math shows some desperation, to say the least. As for the writing test, New York state mandates but does not administer it. Moreover, the test is a ludicrous comparative standard because each school corrects its own tests. In fact, the passing rate for New York City is 86 percent, for New York state, 92 percent.

The Meat Puppets

To the editors:

In his story about bike messengers in the District of Columbia ("Blazing Saddles," December 21), W. Hampton Sides calls the Meat Puppets an "obscure local band." Please inform your inside-the-Beltway fact checkers that the Meat Puppets are from Phoenix, Arizona. As for their alleged obscurity, most of the best music these days comes from bands like the Meat Puppets who don't have million-dollar recording contracts, but instead record on the independent labels.

MARK KUNKEL
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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FROM WASHINGTON

Spare change

Break your campaign promises if you must, Mr. President, but please don't insult our intelligence.

President Clinton would have us believe that the newest deficit projections, released by the Bush administration on its way out the door, make it impossible for him to fulfill his pledge to slice the monster in half during his first term. Just last summer Bush and company were projecting a deficit of (merely) $193 billion in 1996, and shrinking thereafter. Now they say it's more like $266 billion in '96 and $300 billion-plus forevermore. Surprise. And have a nice administration.

Republicans charge that Clinton's shock ("unsettling revelation") is disingenuous. Senator Bob Dole says Clinton "should have known" last summer, when he made his campaign pledges, that the numbers he was relying on were wrong. Of course, this raises the question whether George Bush—or, for that matter, Bob Dole—also "should have known" that the Bush administration was cooking the books. If the numbers were obviously wrong, why did the Republican administration put them out?

But leave that aside. The truth is that Bush and Clinton both knew last summer that the official numbers underestimated the deficit, like all official numbers, including the latest ones. Each man had his own reason for playing along with the hoax. Today the Clintonites complain about budget director Richard Darman's statistical evasions and sleights of hand. But will they really deny themselves the comforts of such tricks? We shall see.

What's more insulting than the phony surprise, though, is the claim that now halving the deficit in four years has become "impossible." Keep in mind that this is a depressingly modest goal to begin with. Clinton is the first recent president who hasn't promised to *eliminate* the deficit during his term. There are those who think that shrinking the deficit is unnecessary, or at least not urgent. They're wrong, but at least they're straight. To say it's "impossible" is absurd.

The 1992 deficit was $290 billion. Most of the shrinkage Clinton was promising last summer was projected to happen anyway, with economic recovery and the end of the S&L bailout. Now he'll have to work a little harder. To get to $145 billion (half of $290 billion) from the current '96 projection of $266 billion, he'll need to find $121 billion. Throw in another $30 billion for infrastructure investment and other promised goodies and we're looking for about $150 billion. A lot. But "impossible"? Hell, it's not even difficult.

Every year the Congressional Budget Office puts out a shopping catalog called *Reducing the Deficit: Spending and Revenue Options*. Eliminating the NASA space station would save $2.3 billion in 1996, raising tax rates from 15-28-31 percent to 16-30-33 percent would bring in $41 billion, etc. Paying farmers not to grow food will cost a projected $10 billion in 1996 (not counting the hidden tax of higher food prices). Airport subsidies will cost $4 billion. Limiting the mortgage interest deduction to $12,000 a year would bring in $6 billion. Subjecting 85 percent of Social Security payments to the income tax would be worth $27 billion. The shopping list goes on for 363 pages, and doesn't even include potential savings from systemic reforms such as reducing health care costs.

When I say it wouldn't be difficult to cut the deficit by $150 billion, I don't mean that it wouldn't be politically unpopular. And no one, however enthusiastic a deficit hawk, is going to buy every item in the CBO catalog. But any honest person ought to have no trouble finding $150 billion worth of deficit reduction that neither hurts the economy nor imperils our national security nor imposes undue hardship on those who can't afford it.

In his confirmation hearing the new budget director, Leon Panetta, talked about the need for "sacrifice ... a word we haven't heard very much over the last twelve years." He's right about that, and bully for him for using the s-word in public. But let's put this "sacrifice" in perspective. Compared with what? Compared with the size of the economy? We're talking something like 2 percent of GNP. That's a few months' growth, even at the current modest rate. Was this country unthinkably worse off in, say, May 1992 than it is now? That's the degree of "sacrifice" we're talking about.

Compared with the short-term sacrifices we have self-righteously recommended to citizens of the former Communist nations to assure their long-term prosperity? Compared with historic efforts America itself has made in the past? The "sacrifice" involved—for our own good, remember—is puny.

Compare the necessary sacrifice, above all, with President Clinton's rhetoric: all that stuff about "revolutionizing government" and "national renewal." Or this passage, chosen almost at random from his campaign tract, *Putting People First*: "Just as America has always transcended the hopes and dreams of every other nation on earth, so must we transcend ourselves. And in Gandhi's words, 'Become the change we wish to see in the world.'" I'm not sure what all that means, but surely "transcending ourselves" would encompass a reform such as taxing employer-paid health insurance above $335 a month (page 257, $22 billion).

Far from transcending the hopes and dreams of every other nation on earth, if the United States can't even achieve the modest goal of halving its budget deficit over four years, we have truly become a "pitiful, helpless giant." That was Richard Nixon's famous description of a nation, wracked by Vietnam, unable to protect its interests in the world. How much more pitiful a giant that can't even handle its own internal affairs.

On the other hand, there is comfort in being told that an obviously desirable goal is "impossible." Saves you from having to struggle toward it, like a would-be dieter who enjoys being told that she's got the wrong "body type." The conspiracy to avoid facing the deficit—jiggering the scale to make it look smaller one day, declaring it too large to deal with the next—includes not just politicians of both parties but the voters themselves. Better to have our intelligence insulted than to have our backbone tested.

My second TRB column, almost ten years ago, was on this same theme, and I've been harping on it ever since. It doesn't seem to have helped. As an experiment, I've decided to give TNR readers six months to save the country without my assistance. See what you can do. During my absence, this column will be in the capable hands of my colleague, Mickey Kaus.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 1, 1993

CLINTON AND MILOSEVIC

Among the ironies of the Bush legacy is that, in retrospect, his record on the economy turns out to be somewhat better than on foreign policy. As we enter our third straight year of low inflationary growth, the results of the president's dithering in Russia, Iraq and the Balkans are becoming damningly clearer. Iraq presents the most immediate challenge to the new administration, as the latest U.S. bombing illustrates. President Bush, seemingly still more outraged by an incursion into Kuwait than by the continuing plight of the Kurds and Shiites, has bequeathed Bill Clinton the fruits of his own indecision. Saddam is alive and sick and eager to test the young American president as soon as possible. Clinton should ready himself for an early, decisive use of force; and remember that Bush's mistake was not in using force, as Warren Christopher might counsel, but in not using enough of it and ridding us of Saddam for good.

It is in the Balkans, however, that the consequences of Bush's foreign policy are truly disastrous. The Vance-Owen peace plan is essentially a device to reward Serbian aggression and stall, rather than prevent, the destruction of an entire country, a destruction encouraged by the Bush-Baker-Eagleburger passivity. As we write, the Bosnian Serbs, pressed by Belgrade, have agreed in principle to the outlines of the Geneva plan, which allows for the withdrawal of heavy artillery from Bosnia, a restoration of the Bosnian economic infrastructure and the insertion of large numbers of United Nations Protection Forces to ensure a continuation of the cease-fire. Bosnia will be partitioned into ten separate provinces, with a deliberately weak central government and constitutional provisions designed to prevent Serb-majority provinces from simply seceding to Greater Serbia; there will be a constitutional court composed of a majority of non-Bosnians to settle intraprovince disputes. Given the alternative—the likely evisceration of the Bosnian state and the deaths of tens of thousands more Bosnian civilians—the settlement is a humanitarian achievement of sorts. We understand why the Bosnian Croats and Muslims have acceded to its logic.

But its logic is that territorial aggression and mass terror pay handsomely for the perpetrators. The deal rewards Serbia's murderous, barbaric assault on Bosnia; by deliberately weakening Bosnia's central government, it allows for the de facto, if not de jure, secession of the Serb-majority Bosnian provinces to the neighboring giant of Greater Serbia; it does nothing to reverse the horrifying ethnic cleansing that was the precursor to this agreement; and, after evidence of concentration camps, mass rapes and other atrocities, the agreement absolves the villains from effective war crime prosecution. It does nothing about the central problem of the region: the aggressive regime of Slobodan Milosevic. It indeed gives him breathing space to consolidate power before moving on to cleanse Kosovo.

Why did the Serbs agree at this point? It was not, we believe, out of some change of heart. Serbia needs some respite from its onslaught and has in any case acquired three-quarters of what it wanted. More pertinently, the prospect of the Clinton administration rattled Milosevic. A member of the Yugoslav delegation to the "peace talks" in Geneva told *The New York Times* that Milosevic and Dobrica Cosic, president of the rump Yugoslavia, had informed the leader of the Bosnian Serbs that "if the war continued, it would no longer be a classic war, but a war in which the West would intervene, using weapons you can't even see." It was ultimately the threat of an Operation Balkan Storm that forced Milosevic to scale back his immediate plans of conquest.

We do not think he has scaled them back permanently. Geneva is a mini-Munich, granting the dictator most of what he wants, allowing him more time to gather his forces and giving the imprimatur of the international community to his war crimes. It is a classic product of Cyrus Vance and David Owen, men who have distinguished themselves by a mutual history of misjudgment and failure in foreign affairs, from Owen's failed negotiations over Zimbabwe to Vance's pitiful record with the Iranians.

If the agreement holds, President Clinton should ensure several things: that, in the continuing negotiations toward a final constitutional settlement, the Serbs do not squeeze out further concessions; that a decent number of American troops are included in the U.N. protection forces to give them credibility with Belgrade; and that the threat of U.S.-led military action remains foremost in the mind of Milosevic. So far, Clinton has shown an admirable ability to keep Belgrade nervous about U.S. intentions. If anything is to be rescued from Bush's Balkan morass, Clinton will have to make Milosevic more nervous still. •

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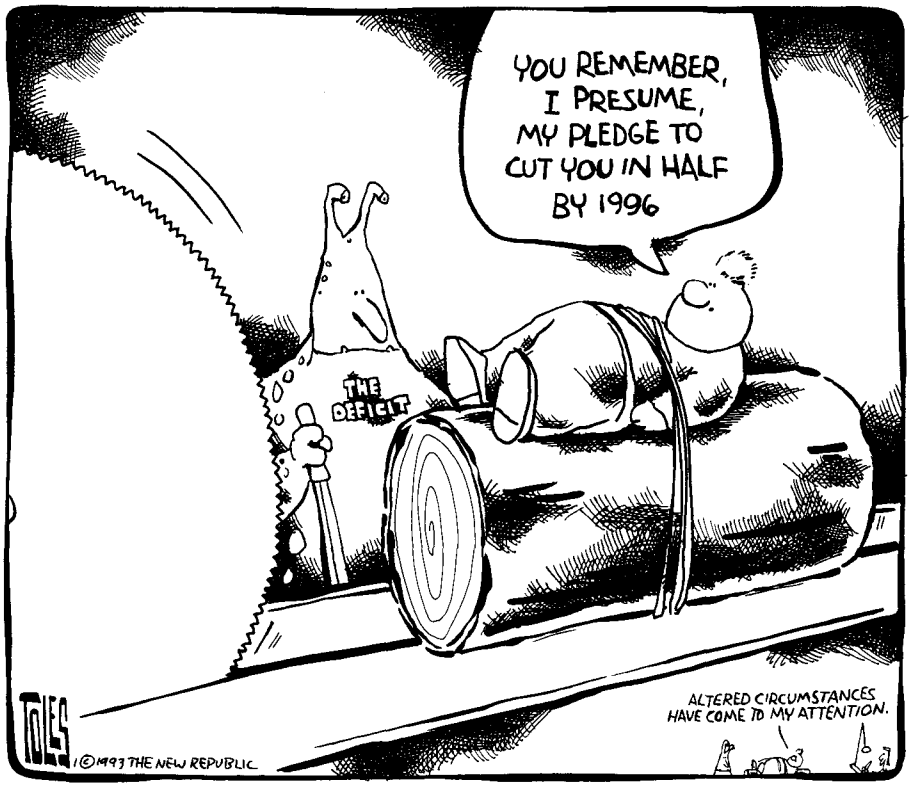
NOTEBOOK

SPEAKER'S CORNER: With the election of a Democratic president, House Speaker Tom Foley seems to have emerged from the coma that affected him through the Reagan-Bush years. Unfortunately, the first victim of his new fire was Representative Dave McCurdy of Oklahoma, whom Foley unceremoniously deposed as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee last week. McCurdy's alleged offense was campaigning for Clinton to nominate him to the post of secretary of defense (horrors!). We suspect the real offense is McCurdy's tendency to think independently of the ossified Democratic leadership. McCurdy has shown courage in breaking ranks over such issues as aid to the contras and means-testing entitlements, as well as in openly criticizing Foley's poor handling of the House banking scandal and challenging the entrenched power of committee chairs by proposing to limit their terms. He has also done a superb job on the Intelligence Committee, single-handedly integrating homosexuals into the CIA simply by talking Robert Gates into it, among other achievements. But Foley is right in one respect: McCurdy doesn't deserve the Intelligence job. He deserves Foley's.


YOU REMEMBER, I PRESUME, MY PLEDGE TO CUT YOU IN HALF BY 1996
THE DEFICIT
ALTERED CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE COME TO MY ATTENTION.
TOLES
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EDUCATING CHELSEA: The president-elect told a startling lie last week, through his spokesman George Stephanopoulos, when he claimed the decision to send Chelsea Clinton to a private school should not be taken as a criticism of the D.C. public school system. The proponents of school choice had a field day with this lame evasion, declaring that Clinton is a hypocrite because he wants to deny other parents the choice he made for his daughter. Clinton could have avoided this embarrassment, and even scored a few points, by telling the simple truth: that the D.C. public schools are among the worst in the country. But, he could have gone on to say, the ills of the public schools are not incurable, as conservatives maintain. What's needed to fix them is a variety of reforms including teacher testing, merit pay, alternate certification, empowerment of principals and administrative restructuring. "I will push for these reforms as president," he might have said. "If they are enacted, I hope the next president who comes to Washington with children will be able to make a different decision." By then, of course, Chelsea will be safely on her way to college.

STROM WARNING: One of the more strangely symbolic moments of last week's congressional inaugurations was the sight of the 90-year-old South Carolina senator and 1948 segregationist presidential candidate Strom Thurmond throwing his arm around Carol Moseley-Braun (she added the hyphen the day after her swearing in), welcoming the first black woman to the U.S. Senate as if they were old friends. The event loses some of its luster, but none of its weirdness, when you consider that the previous night Thurmond wandered by the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, where Braun was having a gala celebration, and asked who the guest of honor was. When an attendee told him, Thurmond muttered, "Carol who? Senator from where?" before shambling off into the night.

MR. INTEGRITY: Not everyone is outraged at the nomination of DNC chair and consummate insider hack Ron Brown for commerce secretary. "Unless the Constitution has been changed this morning, I believe the right to petition the government for redress of grievances is still part of the First Amendment," said one senator on the Commerce Committee. Lobbying, he continued, is "an honorable calling, and nobody should be disqualified from service because they happen to have practiced that calling for a long period of time." The senator: Bob Packwood. •

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THE SHRUB FILE

LAST WORDS

By Douglas G. McGrath

Wednesday, January 20, 1993 (Inauguration Day), 3:30 a.m.

Around 1 o'clock, the Shrub came out of personal quarters. He was wearing his Little Mermaid briefs and a pair of boots from Desert Storm. "Hey, fellas? One last glass of poo at the pit?" So we went to the horseshoe pit for champagne and the Shrub spoke of his place in history.

"One-termer," he said. "Not a lot of—not many one-termers get the old thumbs-up from those history-wrapped-up kind of writers. But yet—let's look at the Bush record. *A history of inactivity.* Some people say inactivity is bad. *Beg to differ.* If you—if you're inactive, you really cut down on your chances of doing something wrong out there. Look at the times when the flak has flown the thickest at me: *when I did something.* That time back whenever when I nominated whatshisname, the black guy I said I wasn't nominating because of his color. *Flak city.* Or the Johnny—how about the Johnny Tower nomination? That Sam Nunn crowd up there on the Hill up there said they ixnayed him because of his drinking. But I think—state secret coming!—I think people didn't like him because he looked like a Munchkin. Nobody wants a Lollipop Guilder in charge of the troops. And so yes, there was job loss. But hey! Lot of people lost their jobs. For awhile there—and *I* can admit when I made a mistake, unlike the Oxford Elvis—we were in a-lot-of-people-losing-their-jobs mode. But let's flip it—*checking out the full half of the glass now*—sure, half of the glass was unemployed, but the other half of the glass out there had good, high-paying jobs in a country where kids could go to sleep for the first time in who-knows-how-long without thinking they were going to wake up with a Soviet MiG in their bed. Also, and I, also—*Bill Clinton?* Are people *out of their minds?*—Also, too, I know a lot of the Sunday morning yak show biggies may have their fanatically anti-me attitudes, but reduction of bedtime panic over nuclear war is nothing to turn your nose up at.

"Remember when I first took the oath of o. Decided to learn Gorby's number in case, nuclear-war-wise, I ever had to reach old Spot-Top in a hurry. It was hard to learn, but flipside coming!—also hard to forget. For instance, when I was picking players to be on the anti-Saddam team just prior to the kickoff of Desert Storm, I called Mitterrand to say look, look, regardez here on this one, we need your aidez-vous pretty pronto por favor, and whose number do you think I dialed? That's right! Old Rorschach head himself!"

(Twilight)

This is the end. Only three of us have been with the Shrub since Day One: me, Diggins and Banks. Banks is leaving the Service. He's always been a thrill-seeker, and he feels there's not enough action here anymore. For a while he was going to join the police, but this morning he told me he's accepted a job teaching kindergarten in the Bronx. Diggins is leaving as well. We were all worried that he'd have trouble finding another job since he's sustained so much damage to his head, but today there was good news. G.E. has hired him to take over programming at NBC.

I'm the only one staying on. I've got my boys to think of. But it won't be the same without the Shrubs. I always promise myself I won't get attached. But when the Shrub thanked me and gave me a potted bush so I could still have a shrub in my life, I must say the Duke heart broke. I guess I'm better at protecting others than I am at protecting myself.

DOUGLAS G. MCGRATH is a New York writer.

WALLA WALLA POSTCARD

LYNCH BURG

By Robert Sullivan

Aside from the hanging, the big news in Walla Walla lately has been the city budget shortfall that nearly cost the dog catcher his job, the debate between the police and the editorial writer about whether the high school kids running around the town at night constitute a gang and the new sidewalks downtown. In fact, the last time Walla Walla's 28,000 citizens had anything close to the kind of national attention they received when Westley Allan Dodd, the convicted child killer, was hanged at the state penitentiary here was when Vice President Nixon drove through in 1956. Despite repeated attempts to attract attention to their city ("What Walla Walla Wants is You," goes the old town slogan), it took that quintessential form of Western execution, a hanging, to once again catch the country's eye.

This irritates Walla Wallans, a proud, church-going group, who like to think of their city, the oldest in the state, as a moral antithesis of progressive Seattle. "The

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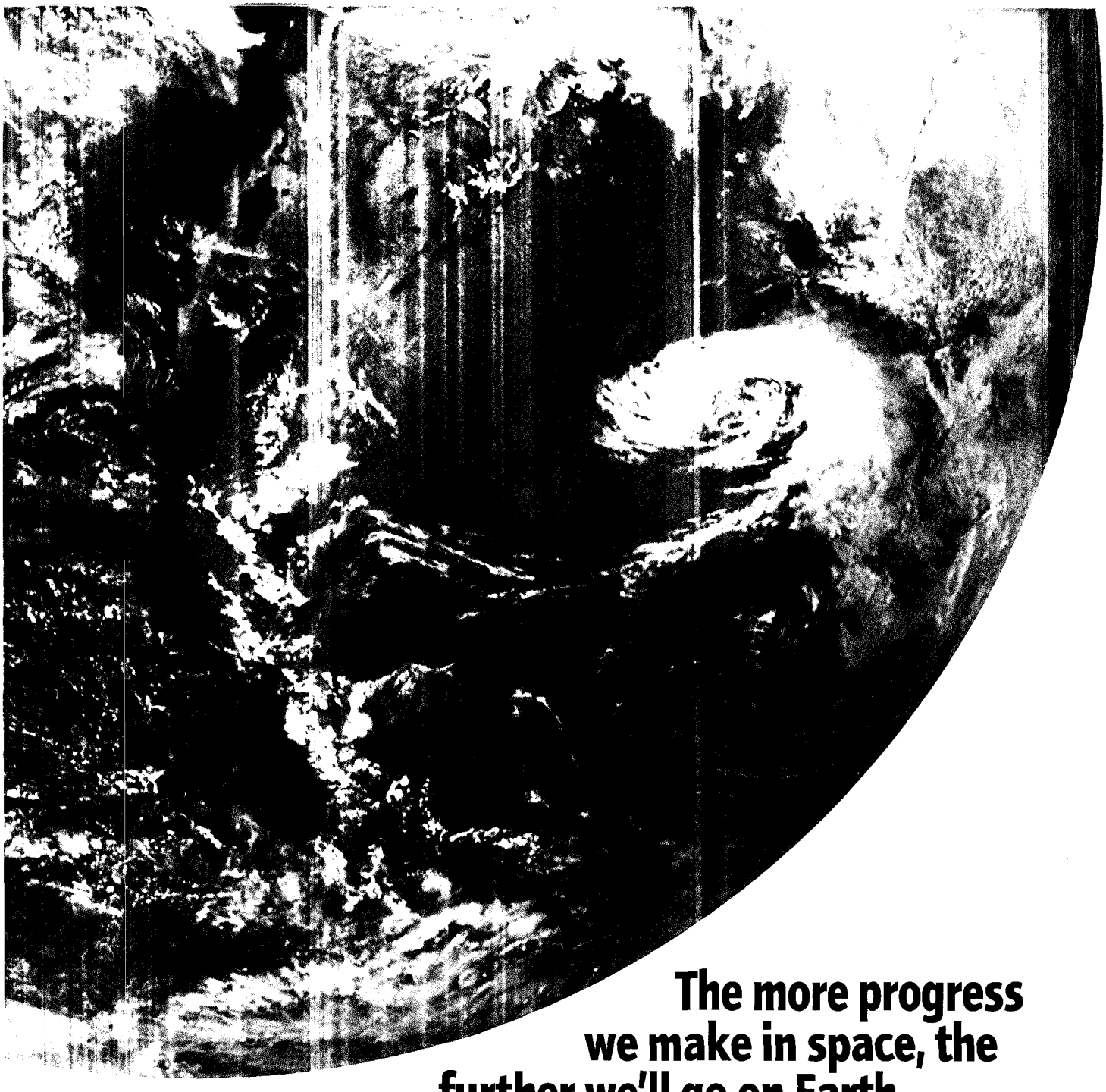

A view of the United States as seen from space.
Photo courtesy of NASA.

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only time that Walla Walla gets on the map is when they kill somebody up there," muttered a farmer to his waitress at the Pastime Cafe on Main Street, twelve hours before the volunteer hangmen fitted the noose over Dodd's neck. Walla Wallans spend their days growing wheat, barley and the famed Walla Walla Sweets, softball-sized onions often eaten like apples. Allen Ginsberg once called it the place where the '50s went. "Walla Walla has a long history of not associating itself with the penitentiary," said Father Kevin Codd, pastor of Saint Patrick's Church. "It prides itself on being a great place to raise kids and stuff."

For the prisoners, though, the town is less idyllic. The penitentiary, located at 1313 North Thirteenth Street, was nicknamed "Concrete Mama" by *Life* magazine in 1979. Charles Colson, the Watergate co-conspirator turned prison evangelist, dubbed it "simply the worst prison in America." Walla Walla leads the nation in the number of hangings, with a total of seventy-three (now seventy-four) since 1904. The last was Joseph Chester Self in 1963; he'd shot a cabdriver for a few dollars.

A few weeks before Dodd's hanging, local T.V. stations began featuring file footage of the 1938 hanging device. Viewers repeatedly watched the trapdoor swing open, repeatedly heard the shuddering crashing sound. The local papers were left to play catch-up with charts mapping the seven-foot drop and illustrations of the noose's six knot loops, under headlines like "Anatomy of a Hanging." Out of practice, prison officials turned to an old U.S. Army manual for instructions on how to stage a proper hanging. The Walla Walla *Union-Bulletin* warned its readers about the coming onslaught of reporters "from around North America." Police Chief Chuck Fulton worried publicly that the pushing and shoving for interviews and photos could mean "mayhem" on the streets—though most people in town suspected that the chief was just getting back at the *Union-Bulletin* for accusing his officers of shooting stray dogs after the dog catcher controversy.

For the most part, Walla Wallans seemed resigned to the execution. The principal of Berney Elementary decided that the school would deal with the death by not mentioning it; on the street people noted that Dodd, who hanged his 4-year-old victim, himself asked to be hanged. The execution didn't really begin to sink into the local psyche until around Sunday, Epiphany, when it came up in sermons. "I'm a Christian, so I guess I have kind of mixed feelings about it," said Kent Boyd, a member of the First Church of God. "Right there in the Bible it says, 'Thou shall not kill,' and yet he says he deserves it, so to me it's a useless waste of money to keep him going up there."

By Monday, true to Chief Foster's predictions, the press rolled in and booked the motels. They were joined by protesters, many from the western half of the state and around Seattle. A guy from Amnesty International leafleted Main Street, and there was a vigil at St. Patrick's Church. Most Walla Wallans avoided the press and the freak cold weather by eating lunch in; at the bakery, regulars were told to use the back door.

But other Walla Wallans weren't going to take the hanging sitting down. Aaron Nielsen, an 18-year-old agriculture major from Walla Walla Community College, was incensed at how few death penalty supporters he had seen on T.V. At around 7 p.m. he and four cowboy-hatted buddies showed up outside the prison, wearing handmade T-shirts labeled "HANG 'EM," "SWING'N," "JUST A SWING'N" and "DIE." The police had partitioned separate pens for protesters and supporters. Nielsen and friends stomped the word "hang" into the snow to mark their turf.

"I came out here because I support capital punishment 110 percent," Nielsen said. "This town, it's a good clean community, real Western, and in my opinion people who believe in the West, well, the way I was raised, it was real survival of the fittest, and, you know, so on." Within an hour, a crowd of high school kids arrived; parents brought children. In all, about 150 people showed up. At 8 p.m., just in time for the East Coast news, the television reporters came out of their satellite vans and warm rented cars and switched on the lights.

The jeering supporters drowned out the protesters' rendition of "Kumbaya." Eventually the protesters gave up singing and just paced in silent circles. The Whitman College radio station played Van Halen's "Hang 'em High." A woman in her 20s sitting on a man's shoulders shouted and taunted the silent protesters. "Die Dodd! Die, you bastard!" she screamed. "Hey liberals, when you go to Hell say 'Hi' to Dodd!" The T.V. lights accentuated the veins bulging in her neck as she shook her fist.

At exactly 12:01 a.m., the supporters—who assumed that Dodd was dead—cheered and set off fireworks. The protesters waited, silently holding candles and looking up at the moon and the penitentiary on top of the hill. "The whole world is watching Walla Walla," a protester whispered. At 12:18 a guard brought word of Dodd's death. A man asked a television camera, "What have we gained?"

The next day the mob and the news vans were gone, and Walla Walla's merchants shoveled the new snow off their new sidewalks. The duck pond in Pioneer Park was just about frozen, and looking out past the penitentiary you couldn't separate the white fields from the stratus-white sky. In the Pastime Cafe, people shook their heads while reading the morning papers, and then turned the page. "That's it," said Martha Burroughs, pouring coffee. "This probably opened the door for a lot more of them. Hangings, I mean."

ROBERT SULLIVAN is a writer based in Portland, Oregon.

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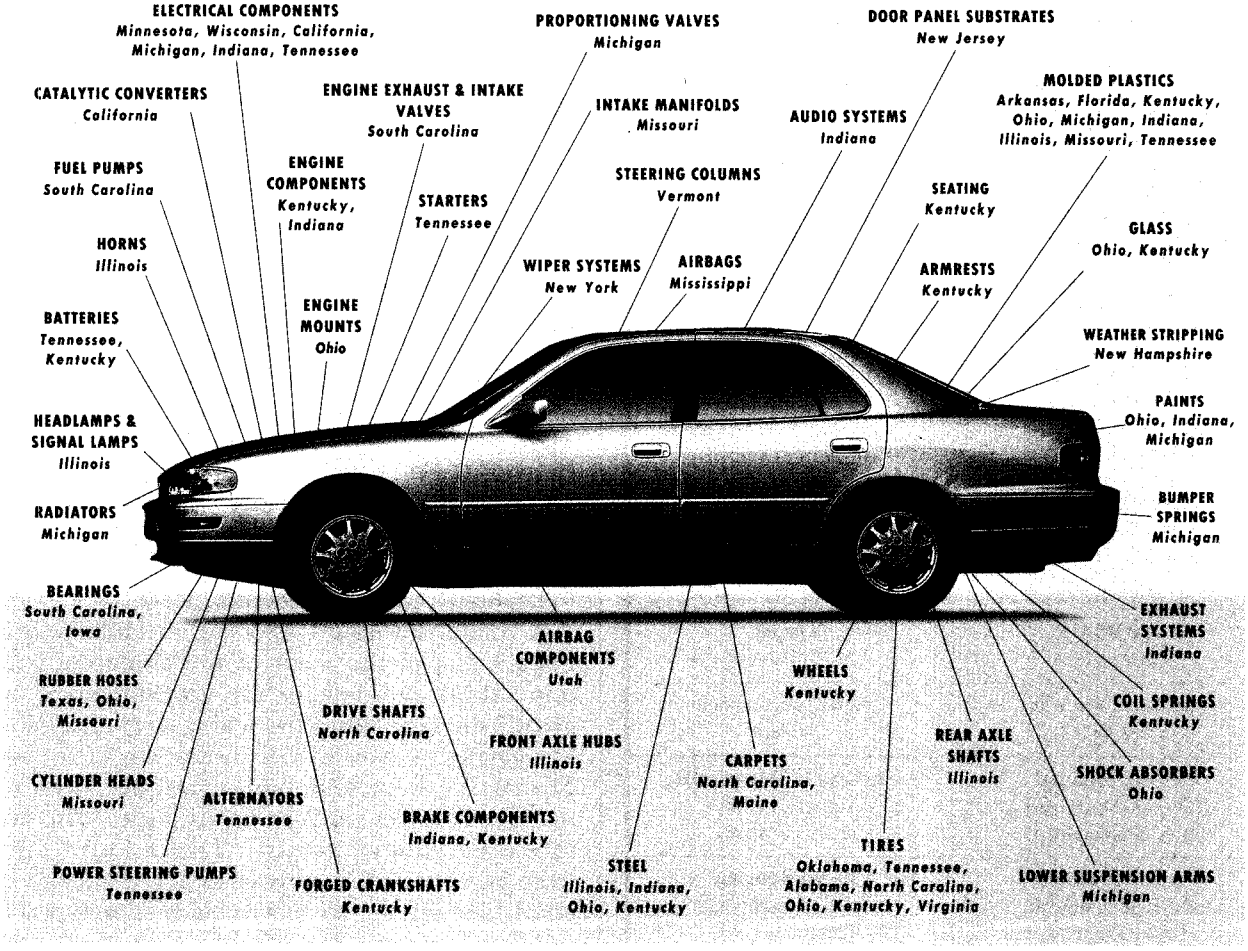

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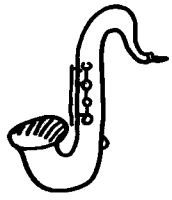
POP! GOES WASHINGTON



THE WARHOL FACTORY	THE CLINTON WHITE HOUSE
Pittsburgh	Little Rock
Campbell's soup can	*saxophone*
speed freaks	policy nerds
large silver wigs	*large silver hairdo*
parties	Democratic Party
Edie Sedgwick (goes to all the parties; nobody's sure who influences whom)	**Hillary** (goes to all the parties; nobody's sure who influences whom)
Fred Hughes (confidante; kept business going after the boss went to Bloomingdale's)	**Al Gore** (confidante; will keep business going should the boss go to Bloomingdale's)
Steve Rubell (funmeister)	**Tipper** (funmistress)
guest appearance on "Love Boat"	*guest appearance on "Arsenio"*
Gerard Malanga (studio assistant; did a dance with a whip)	**Thomas F. McLarty III** (chief of staff; cracks a whip)
Vincent Fremont (solid, dependable financial guy)	**Lloyd Bentsen** (solid, dependable financial guy)
celebrity portraits	*celebrity fund-raisers*
Superstars	the Cabinet
Montauk	*the Bloodworth Thomasons*
8-hour movie of a guy sleeping	the campaign
Archie and Amos	*Socks*
art	*policy*
paint	money
Velvet Underground	Michael Bolton
Pat Hackett (chronicler of the times; quickly given a set of keys)	**Sidney Blumenthal** (chronicler of the times; quickly given a set of keys)

DOUGLAS COUPLAND

WASHINGTON SCENE

PLUM CRAZY

By Eric Konigsberg

On a rainy Thursday in downtown Washington they file into the lobby of the Madison Hotel, faces long, shoulders hunched, the tails of their Burberry coats flapping in the stiff breeze. There are some 200 of them, armed with résumés and legal pads. They are a familiar type: recent law school grads who have been leaving work at Akin, Gump at 4:45 to moonlight for the transition team; third-year associates whose mushy law school idealism has been so stifled by law firm life that the call of public service rings loudly in their ears; senior partners desperate to escape the girdered-glass confines of K Street. All have been lured to the seminar by the title: "How to Get the Plum Legal Jobs in the New Administration." For $180, the seminar's sponsor, *Legal Times*, promises to divulge the crust of information every aspiring FOB longs to know: "What to submit to the decision-makers to facilitate the appointment process."

A young downtown associate in Hillaryesque serge finds a seat at the front of the conference room. "I don't think working for the government is anything great," she says. "But I'm looking to get out of my job." She giggles nervously. "I do insurance defense work and I hate it." A twentysomething corporate lawyer who flew in from Connecticut is more idealistic. "This is a really rare opportunity," he says. "Like a lot of my friends from law school, I see this as the big chance to do some good." He says he has his whole plan mapped out. He went to "a top-ten law school." He's got connections. "My senator's a friend of Bill. A couple of my law school professors are plugged in."

There are a lot of people like him here. They've read *Putting People First*. They've met Zoe Baird, once. "This is going to be a lawyer's administration," declares a type-A woman whose dyed tresses are pulled back on her head. She hopes to work for the U.S. Trade Rep. "I've done corporate law in Japan and I've worked in the legal office of a U.S. multinational, so I'm familiar with regulatory tactics." I ask if she went to a top-ten law school. "I went to Harvard," she sniffs.

The panel of instructors assembles on the dais. Dick Hermann, president of the legal publishing house Federal Reports, holds up the list of Clinton appointments, printed on pink paper, which he has distributed to all the seminar's participants. He calls them "the plum-colored sheets," and proceeds to detail the 1,600 lawyer and legal-related posts to be filled by the new president.

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There is also a 191-page booklet called "The 1993 Lawyer's Plum Book," which Hermann has helped to compile. His co-author, Linda Sutherland, introduces the subject of pay rates. She refers to page 8 of the book, which contains a chart listing jobs with salaries ranging from $108,200 to $148,000. The faces in the audience light up. "Most of you will want to look on page 13," she says. The jobs there start at $11,903.

Hermann explains at great length the differences between political appointments and civil service positions and the further differences between "career reserved" civil service and general civil service positions. The members of the audience regard him with pained expressions. It is a bit confusing. After nearly an hour, a hand is timidly thrust into the air. "Yes," Hermann says eagerly, "a question?"

"Yeah," she says. "My question is: Can you turn off those blinding lights? I can't see anything and they're giving me a headache." Her request throws open the floodgates of angst. The questions keep coming. "Is it all right to cultivate more than one contact at a time?" asks a man in a suit several sizes too small. "Do you think having worked on the campaign helps?" another says. "How important is the cover letter?" a young buck with slicked-back hair asks. "If you have been extremely active politically," comes a voice from the corner, "would you put that on your résumé?"

"Yes," Sutherland says. Two hundred top-ten law school graduates record this exchange in their notebooks. We take a break.

At 4 p.m. the panel reconvenes. Peter Jenkins, director of Nationwide Career Counseling for Attorneys, speaks. "What you have to remember throughout the process of your search for your plum is that you are salespeople," he says. "You are marketing yourselves. Is anybody here interested in marketing?" The room is silent, but he continues. "The bottom line is, you have to convince whoever's responsible for hiring you to hire you." Jenkins repeats each point at least three times. "The strategy to remember is: condition other people to feel good about you. This is your sales strategy. Condition other people to feel good about you. Like Pavlov's dogs, they've got to be trained to respond a certain way when they think about you. So, what you want to do in the campaign for your job is to condition people to feel good about you."

Jenkins moves on. "We tend to like people that we perceive to be like ourselves. We tend to like those people that we perceive to be like ourselves.... You have to maximize your similarities and minimize your differences.... If you do that, it's like cheating." He chuckles. "Like cheating. Now, if you're really serious about this you might want to consider matching your interviewer's breathing rate." This prompts a few laughs. "I'm serious," he says. "The subconscious signal your interviewer gets is, 'This is a person who is just like me.' This is when—" He is interrupted by a man who has stood up from his seat at the front of the room.

"Um, I'm a little confused," the fellow says. "What exactly do you mean by 'sales strategy'?"

"That's a great question," Jenkins says.

By the time Jenkins finishes coloring parachutes, only about fifty people and ten minutes remain for Sheila Kaplan, a *Legal Times* editor, to explain the loopholes of Clinton's new ethics rules. But she is concise. "Most legal headhunters and lobbying firms know it's still business as usual," she says. "The five-year ban is only on lobbying directly the agency you've worked for, but you could still take on a client who has an interest with that agency." Heads nod, and a man sitting in front of me writes YES in his booklet.

Soon the seminar is over. A woman in a Western shirt has spied me writing in my notebook and approaches with her business card. It says she's from Lubbock, Texas, and that her first name is Mary Alice. She explains that she's really in town for meetings with Vernon Jordan's office and some Justice Department people she knows from a case. I ask Mary Alice what her interest is in the federal government. Her breathless response is one of which Jenkins would be proud:

"I've been a Gore contributor for years, and Hillary came to my office once. She's just great. I'm really most qualified for a job in the Civil Rights Commission of the DOJ. I'm coming back for the inauguration, and then hopefully soon to start work. It's really a generational thing. I want to see change. I'm divorced and I can just do it. I'm doing this for philosophical reasons. I've always been idealistic and I'm 46, so I guess I'll be that way the rest of my life." She stops. "Don't you think so?"

I see Ms. Harvard Law on the way out and ask if she found the seminar productive. She shrugs. "The extent of my experience is such that I should get a high-level appointment anyway. It's just that my contacts ... my contacts aren't that wonderful.... Well, I shouldn't say that. I've got a connection in the Cabinet. My husband knows Bob Reich from school, but uh, they don't really like each other, so I might not press that." •

Laura Tyson's professional honesty.

ECONOCLAST

By Michael Lewis

Like most economic controversies, the one over the appointment of Laura Tyson to chair the Council of Economic Advisers has something of the flavor of a theological dispute. Just about everyone qualified to pronounce on her suitability for the job is partisan, especially within her profession. Paul

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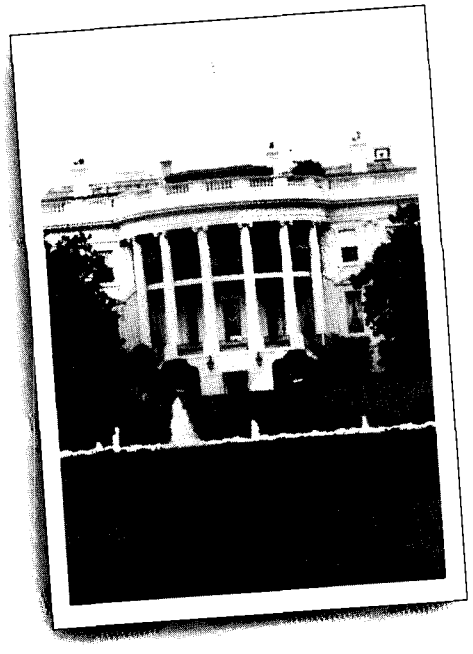
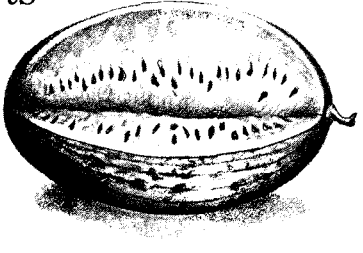
HOW THE COUNTRY GETS THINGS DONE

ONE IN A SERIES



Until November 3, 1992, a place called Hope might never have appeared in the World Almanac, except for its prize-winning watermelons. But on that November day the town of Hope, Arkansas joined Independence, Missouri and Abilene, Kansas and over thirty other small towns that have sent their sons to the White House. Seems that small towns have a way of bringing up youngsters with virtues Americans admire – like realism about the present, optimism about the future, and the determination to get things done. Over the years, we ourselves have learned what small towns and rural communities can do. Back when our homes had no electric light or power, we rolled up our sleeves and went to work. We built the nation's rural electric co-ops, and lit up the countryside. We've had our sleeves rolled up ever since, helping with all kinds of imaginative efforts to stimulate local economies, create jobs, improve health care, and strengthen education. From a tradition of cooperation and community spirit deeply rooted in millions of members across the nation, rural electric co-ops are continuing to show how the country gets things done – with new ideas, new energy, and, sure enough, new hope.



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Krugman of MIT has said that Bill Clinton's selection ignores the "pecking order" in academic economics. Robert Lawrence of Harvard says the choice can only mean that Clinton wants to advise himself.

There is, of course, an element of jealousy in objections of this sort, but there may be more to it than that. Among many economists there is the feeling that Tyson has abandoned the profession. It isn't that she lacks book learning. She's got plenty of credentials: summa cum laude from Smith, Ph.D. from MIT—the high church of mathematical economics—early tenure at Berkeley, a forest of publications with bodice-ripping titles such as *Incentives, Income Sharing and Institutional Innovation in the Yugoslav Firm* and *Modelling Structural Adjustments: Micro and Macro Elements in a General Equilibrium Framework.* It is what she has done with her credentials that so unsettles many university economists. Now 46, Tyson has spent the last ten years ignoring some of the most sacred assumptions about international trade. As Herbert Stein, who chaired Richard Nixon's Council of Economic Advisers, says, "The role of the White House economist is largely to explain that markets work. She starts with more of a predisposition toward government intervention in the market than most past chairmen of the council, and than most economists."

That's putting it mildly. The essence of the neoclassical comparative advantage trade theory, which has guided American policy since the end of World War II, is that it always pays for a country to keep its markets open and free of government interference, even if other countries do not. But the essence of the better part of Tyson's academic work is that government should interfere, especially in high-tech industries, which she accords a special place in our economic future. Left to their own devices, American high-tech industries invest too little in themselves, she argues, especially in the face of heavily subsidized foreign competition. In many cases companies are constrained by high start-up costs. And all companies fail to account for the other spill-over benefits—externalities, in economics jargon—from high technology. "Exporting a dollar's worth of oranges may have the same effect on the trade balance as exporting a dollar's worth of computers," she writes in her newly published book, *Who's Bashing Whom?*, "but the two have radically different effects on other crucial determinants of economic health, including employment, productivity, wages, skill formation and investment in research and development."

The book is an extension of Tyson's faith in government activism. The problem with the argument, however, is that neither she nor anyone else has proved that the benefits justify the costs. Tyson's work, including the work she has overseen at the Berkeley Roundtable of International Economics, has consisted largely of assembling case studies. These show persuasively that foreign governments have intervened successfully on behalf of their high-tech industries to tip the markets in their directions. They also show how foreign governments have played a role in putting American companies out of business, in some cases—as with the semiconductor industry—costing our producers more than it benefits our consumers.

Nowhere do they show that the interventionist policies actually benefit the country that puts them in place. Studies of both the $26 billion spent by a consortium of European governments to get Airbus off the ground and of the Japanese semiconductor industry confirm what the free trader theorists would expect: that the policies actually decreased social welfare. As Krugman has put it, "There just isn't any evidence that an aggressive strategic trade policy can produce large gains."

As a result, one feels that the prevailing trade theory is being chucked out of the White House without an intellectually respectable replacement. The argument that markets don't work comes along at a suspiciously convenient time, when everyone is looking to explain the perceived market failure of American companies. In view of the obvious gap in Tyson's argument—the absence of persuasive quantitative evidence of the welfare gains of government intervention—it is also a little suspicious that she has made no attempt herself to fill it with measurements. A cynic might say there is no place for science in Tyson's work: because her theories aren't couched in such a way that they can be tested, they can't ever be proved wrong. Evidence that Japan actually would have been better off had it not intervened in its semiconductor industry, for example, can be dismissed in a variety of ways: that the measurement of the benefits are too narrow; that only time will reveal the full benefits to the economy of a thriving trade in semiconductors; that the Japanese spent more money intervening than was needed.

But this sort of positivist talk—so central to academic economics—is suddenly even less pertinent than ever. The conceit that economics should be subjected to the same standards as physics has no place either in Tyson's thought or in the Clinton administration. There wasn't anyone at the December economic conference in Little Rock who stood up for the scientifically correct free trade ideology. At the heart of Clinton's choice of economic advisers is the view, seconded by Tyson's writings, that economic policy-making is less like science than like cooking. From now on we'll be adding our subsidies to taste, or as Tyson puts it, "We need to improvise in a world that provides no ideal models."

It's hard to say exactly what this means in practice. No doubt everyone will agree on Tyson's proposal to intensify the demands for access to foreign markets, especially the technology markets of Japan. The Clinton economic team may also agree on a set of subsidies for research and development in high-tech industries that may be labeled industrial policy. In the past, one of the main political brakes on government intervention in the market has been the State Department's fear of alienating allies, which is much weaker in the aftermath of the cold war. And if it happens, depending upon how our trading partners respond, we may end up in a

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trade war fought with arms race logic, with each trading bloc trying to outsubsidize the others in order to acquire the comparative advantage.

If there are risks that come with Tyson's appointment, though, there are also some spillover benefits. A clear-eyed view of what is important within our economy implies a view of what is not, such as the subsidy to honeybee farmers. Tyson describes herself as a "cautious activist," one who "supports general policy measures such as a more generous R&D tax credit and increases in public funding for civilian R&D and education." Nowhere in her writing is she anything but hostile to simple protection—quotas and tariffs—even for high-technology industries. Her lack of free market dogmatism may make her more credible when it comes time to discuss the self-defeating protectionism that is now routinely endorsed in Washington because we lack any coherent view of how government should relate to industry.

The second side effect is that we may, for a change, have a White House economist with a bit of integrity. There has been a disturbing tendency for CEA economists to abandon their science the moment they are hired, at which point they become economic hucksters waving cheery forecasts of higher employment and lower inflation. One vice to which Tyson is not prone is the intellectual dishonesty born of cowardice. There are a number of ways she could have couched her views on trade so that they seemed more mainstream than they are. For instance, she could have advocated the same blend of policies in the interest of national security. So she deserves some credit for having the nerve to break explicitly with the catechism of her profession. She was also willing to jeopardize her political future with a negative review of Robert Reich's recent book, *The Work of Nations*, in *The American Prospect*. In any case, it will be refreshing on the heels of Michael Boskin to have a White House economist who will do something other than promise that the recovery is right around the corner. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

THE UNDEAD

By Fred Barnes

Bill Clinton and Richard Nixon have something in common besides having been elected president by a minority of voters (43 percent) in a three-way race. Soon after winning, their thoughts turned to re-election and the creation of a governing majority for their party, at least at the presidential level. Nixon succeeded. He wooed the 13.5 percent of the electorate that voted for Alabama Governor George Wallace in 1968, producing a conservative Republican majority that endured for two decades. Now Clinton is eyeing Ross Perot's 19 percent of the 1992 electorate. If he attracts two-thirds of the Perotistas, he'll not only be assured of re-election in 1996, he'll spawn a center-left Democratic coalition. Sounds easy, but it's not. Clinton will have a far harder time producing a new majority than Nixon did.

Clinton's hankering after the Perot vote is hardly a secret. At his economic summit in Little Rock in December, Clinton suddenly took Perot's chief cause, reducing the federal budget deficit, as his own. (He'd practically ignored the deficit during the campaign.) He recruited the man who drafted Perot's economic plan, John White, to deliver a deficit-is-worsening message at the summit. Two days later Clinton stressed deficit reduction in a *Wall Street Journal* interview. Is it more important to attack the deficit or hold to his spending plans? "My inclination would be to increase spending less," Clinton said. Soon his aides were talking explicitly about going after the Perot vote. And shortly before Inauguration Day, two Clinton allies explained how the hijacking of the Perot vote could be pulled off. Their advice appeared in *The New Democrat*, the Democratic Leadership Council publication. So it's quasi-official: if you voted for Perot, Clinton wants you.

Clinton's situation isn't precisely analogous to Nixon's, and the differences are noteworthy. For one thing, Nixon came to power during a period of extraordinary national turmoil prompted by the civil rights struggle, Vietnam and the counterculture. And it's in times of political crisis—the Civil War, the Depression—that realignments occur. Nixon exploited the polarized atmosphere, cast himself as champion of the "silent majority" and captured almost all of the Wallace vote, formerly Democratic. The circumstances Clinton faces are comparatively tranquil. There's heightened political interest, but no crisis.

It was also much easier for Nixon to hold his base while appealing to a new constituency, Wallace's. He emphasized the same conservative issues that galvanized core Republican voters: crime, traditional values, race, military strength. "It was the natural thing for him to do," says Republican consultant Jeffrey Bell. But to attract the Perot vote, Clinton will do the unnatural thing: go not only against the grain of the dominant liberal wing of his party, but against the thrust of his campaign in the primaries. "He has to become Paul Tsongas," says Bell, playing up the deficit because it's the paramount concern of Perot voters. That's why appealing to them is, in Bell's words, "a delicate problem for Clinton."

Clinton has no choice but to embrace the substance of Perot's populism. As a student of past presidents, he knows outsider populism, or stylistic populism,

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doesn't work. Jimmy Carter tried that, wearing sweaters and larding his administration with Georgians, and failed. Clinton isn't comfortable with that anyway. He's a career politician. He prefers Democratic elites to outsiders.

The two issues that define Perotistas, deficit reduction and political reform, are linked. "The perceived corruption in the political system and the consequent demand for reform of campaign finance and lobbying from Congress to the White House has become the dominant explanation for why Washington has let the federal budget deficit and our economic future spiral out of control," write Bill Galston and Elaine Kamarck in *The New Democrat.* Perot voters want someone to change the way business is done in Washington, someone with an independent streak, someone who's in government but not of government. And they want real action on the deficit—by cutting the cost of government. In the national exit poll taken on Election Day, 55 percent of voters said they'd settle for fewer services if that meant government would cost less. But 66 percent of Perot voters said they preferred cheaper government to more services. They won't be fooled by symbolism or spin control. "The Perot voters have a deep skepticism," says Will Marshall of the Progressive Policy Institute, the think tank of the DLC. "They need to be shown palpable results on the deficit and making Washington more accountable."

Mostly, Perot voters want a president who'll stand up noisily to special interests in Washington, liberal and conservative. Republican pollster Frank Luntz, who worked for Perot, conducted focus groups with Perot supporters last summer in Philadelphia, Detroit, Memphis, Orlando, Los Angeles and Denver. They turned out to be roughly one-third Democrats, one-third Republicans, one-third independents. The Democrats shouldn't be difficult for Clinton to get, Luntz says. They were leery of Clinton on character issues (womanizing, the draft), issues that faded with Clinton's election. The Republicans and independents will be tougher. "A lot of them were Reaganites who came to him in 1980 but hadn't been Republicans before," Luntz says. To grab them, Clinton's "got to be the Ronald Reagan of the 1990s, separating himself from the government and picking and choosing his battles with Congress." Luntz is dubious that Clinton can manage this. "That's not Clinton's style. He's not confrontational. He much more of a compromiser. That's not what Perot voters are looking for."

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In truth, Clinton doesn't have to be all that confrontational. He'd draw some Perotistas by zapping some pocket of the Washington political class the way he nailed Jesse Jackson last June on Sister Souljah. And Clinton is the only political game in town. Perot will try to hold on to some of his voters with his recently revitalized United We Stand campaign, but he's a pale shadow of the force he was in the campaign. And Republicans, Luntz concedes, "aren't ready as a party to go after Perot voters and say, join us. We don't have the agenda, we don't have the platform, we don't have the spokesman. We're just not ready."

Clinton has other issues to trumpet besides the deficit: welfare reform and "reinventing government," a slogan for making the federal bureaucracy more effective, but not by enlarging or gutting it. "The conundrum for Clinton is that his supporters are much more apt to support an expansive use of government, when the national electorate was more concerned with limiting the cost of government," says Marshall. "Reinventing government is the only hope for solving this conundrum." It has the potential for satisfying both Perotistas and Clinton's more liberal supporters—that is, if it actually amounts to something.

Can Clinton succeed? The answer is yes, but not by transforming Perot voters into Democrats. James Carville, Clinton's chief campaign strategist, believes "it would be a mistake to be obsessed with Perot voters, getting 80 percent of the 19 percent." They're part of "an emerging permanent group" in the electorate "that demonstrates temporary allegiance to the two parties.... They'll never be hard core, like me," says Carville. But to serve Clinton's purpose, they don't need to be. "If we get them to identify with us more than with them [Republicans], we'll be pretty successful." This level of success is within Clinton's grasp. •

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Why All Americans Should Support A Moratorium on Immigration

The Facts:

FACT: More alien workers entered the U.S. labor market in 1992 than jobs were created, according to Immigration Service and Department of Labor statistics. America's disadvantaged workers suffer disproportionately from the steady influx of low-skilled, low-wage labor.

FACT: The Census Bureau now projects that there will be 383 million Americans in 2050, largely because of what *The Washington Post* describes as "massive immigration." That's 50 percent more Americans than there are today, and 83 million more than the Census Bureau projected just four years ago.

FACT: Thousands of illegal immigrants enter the country every day — 2 million to 3 million a year. Fake documents are easily obtained, providing access to benefits meant for legal residents .

Our national political leadership is apparently unaware that a majority of Americans of all ethnic backgrounds favor reduced immigration (Roper Poll, May 1992; Latino National Political Survey, December 1992). In fact, immigration policymakers seem more concerned with pleasing the special interests than doing the will of the people they are elected to serve.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) wants to change that.

FAIR is calling for a three-year moratorium on immigration, excluding immediate families of U.S. citizens, while the nation works to:

1) substantially eliminate illegal immigration;

2) assess the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of immigration;

3) air the issue in national debate; and

4) develop a comprehensive U.S. immigration policy consistent with national goals.

The Facts Speak For Themselves. Immigration is an important issue that needs to be addressed with regard to its impact on health care, labor, industrial development, and the environment. It's time for you to get involved and help make a difference in America's future.

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Warren Christopher, trimmer.

CLOTHED AMBITION

By Jacob Heilbrunn

In 1896 Lord Salisbury interrupted a dinner party at Hatfield to ask Princess Christian, the daughter of Queen Victoria, for permission to open a red dispatch box. After studying the message in it, he scribbled for a moment and informed the princess that the kaiser had just landed 150 men in Portuguese East Africa. "What answer have you sent?" asked the princess. "I haven't answered," replied Salisbury. "I have sent ships."

When Bill Clinton nominated Warren Christopher secretary of state, he selected the disciple of a man who has always sent answers rather than ships. In accepting the nomination, Christopher studiously avoided mention of his old diplomatic mentor, Cyrus Vance, invoking instead the shades of George Marshall and Dean Acheson. Their resistance to Soviet expansion had inspired him to public service when he was in law school. But now, in the "vastly more complicated era" of the post-cold war world, an entirely new set of dangers, from ethnic conflict to nuclear proliferation to environmental degradation, confronts American policy-makers. This neat division between the world of one great danger and the present era of many perils allowed Christopher to elide his own days at the State Department under Vance.

Christopher's silence about Vance is understandable. Clinton had already been sniped at for resurrecting the semidead souls of the Carter presidency. Vance stands in particularly low esteem for pusillanimity in facing down the Iranian mullahs in the 1970s and for appeasing the Serbs today. In his memoirs Vance purred that Christopher "was truly my alter ego, and his decision on any issue was the equivalent of mine." As Zbigniew Brzezinski pointed out long ago, "Vance, and later Christopher, preferred to litigate endlessly, to shy away from the unavoidable ingredient of force in dealing with contemporary international realities, and to have an excessive faith that all issues can be resolved by compromise." If this were the whole truth, Christopher as the architect of American foreign policy would be bad news indeed. But a scrutiny of his record, such as it is—for Christopher hasn't left many tracks—suggests that, much like his new boss, Christopher is impelled by an uneasy blend of heady principle and exquisitely calibrated ambition. The result is a career marked by moral principles that are more often invoked than followed.

Christopher's childhood, not unlike Clinton's, was an exercise in surmounting obstacles. Born in Scranton, North Dakota, in 1925, Warren was 11 when his father suffered a stroke following the collapse of his bank. During the Depression he had driven with his father over the Dakotan prairie, watching him conduct foreclosure sales. Witness to the victims of his father's dealings, he had to suppress any hint of sympathy. Here is one of the sources of his famous restraint and show of sobriety. "That period accounts for my liberal leanings," Christopher has remarked. "Those leanings don't necessarily equate to public service, but they have led to public service" (no allusion here to Marshall or Acheson!). In a commencement address at the University of North Dakota in 1982 he counseled the graduates that "it is not in escaping adversity, but in answering it that our character is defined."

When his father died, Warren was 13. The family moved to Los Angeles, where his mother worked as a sales clerk, while he attended Hollywood High School and delivered newspapers. He won a scholarship to Redlands University before transferring to USC, from which he graduated with a Navy commission. After whiling away a few months in 1945 on an oiler, he entered Stanford Law School. Earning top grades, he became the first editor of the newly established *Stanford Law Review* and landed a clerkship with William Douglas, whose liberal ethos he would echo.

After the stint with Douglas, he returned to California in 1950 and to the beginnings of what might have looked like a conventional legal career. He joined the eminently respectable firm of O'Melveny & Myers and soon raised eyebrows. He ran a letter-writing campaign to denounce Senator Joseph McCarthy and worked in the election campaign of Edmund "Pat" Brown against the fire-breathing conservative William Knowland. Brown held Christopher in such esteem that he had him write his inaugural speech, for which Christopher coined the convenient phrase "irresponsible liberalism." In legal practice, though, Christopher avoided liberalism even of the responsible sort. In 1959 he opposed citizens' initiatives aimed at curbing noise pollution from bellowing jet planes over Los Angeles and San Diego. In fact, Christopher fought and won a string of landmark cases on behalf of the airlines before the Supreme Court. Idealism had its professional limitations.

Christopher trimmed still further in his next career move. In the aftermath of the Watts riots in 1965, Governor Brown, smarting under press attacks, appointed Christopher to serve on the McCone Commission, ostensibly set up to investigate the causes of the rioting but really aimed at relieving the city and state governments of blame. John McCone, the former director of the CIA, was a troglodytic conservative, but Christopher worked for him nonetheless. Nor was he averse to writing large portions of the report that deflected responsibility for the violence from L.A. Police Chief William Parker. By blaming the riot on "riffraff," the report whitewashed the crucial issue of police racism. Christo-

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

A History Lesson

Children often complain that history is nothing but a bunch of boring facts, which they learn, write down on a test and then forget as soon as the test is over. "What's the point?" they ask.

Now, I can't see anything wrong with learning that Vasco Nunez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and "discovered" the Pacific Ocean. But it's true that these facts are not especially interesting, or memorable, unless you know some of the story behind them—for instance, that Balboa and his men slogged through the steamy jungles of Panama and found another ocean where Europeans had no idea there was one. (They thought they'd already crossed the ocean separating Europe from China.)

History is an exciting story—and often not a pleasant one—about the real-life adventures of heroes, villains and people who are a little bit of both. Unfortunately, most children would never know that because the history textbooks they read are not written by story tellers, and the texts are so crammed with details that it's hard to follow what's going on—or to care about it in the least.

Joy Hakim, a former teacher and journalist, understands these problems, and she's written a new ten-volume history of the U.S., called *The History of Us*, for children ages 8 to 13. Hakim's history is wonderfully vivid and engaging, but it is more. Kids who read these books will get a grounding in U.S. history and the often difficult process by which we became a nation. They will also find out a lot about how to think about and understand the past.

History is an exciting story about the real adventures of heroes, villains and people who are a little bit of both. But most children never find that out.

Hakim's first volume, *The First Americans*, which is the only one published thus far, begins with the appearance of the original settlers—the ones who crossed the Bering Strait while woolly mammoths still roamed what would become the U.S. (We were all, Hakim remarks, once immigrants.) After talking about the peoples who inhabited this country before the Europeans appeared, she goes on to tell the grim but fascinating story of how the Europeans conquered the Americas.

Hakim is terrific at making a historical situation present to the imagination. Here's how she describes Cortez's wonder and admiration for the Aztec capital—which he was soon to destroy:

> As he nears the city he rubs his eyes. He can hardly believe what he sees. Tenochtitlan is more beautiful than any city on earth, he says. It is an island, five miles square, surrounded by a glistening lake [that]. . . . shines turquoise in the morning sun. Houses and public buildings are chalk-white or earth-red. Some are gilded, as if made of the gold the Spaniards covet.

Hakim does not flinch from presenting some of the most troubling things about our early history—like the brutal fact that the conquerors of the Americas enslaved the people they found living here, and, when these people died off or wouldn't work, imported African slaves to take their place. In the past, historians—especially those writing for children—would have glossed over all this. These days, some people say that this troubling record shows the rottenness of our whole civilization—from the beginning. Hakim is neither squeamish nor politically correct. She presents historical facts as something for readers to think and talk about—and learn from:

> Slavery was common everywhere then, and it didn't seem wrong to many people: not to the Portuguese or the Arabs or the Dutch or the Spaniards or the Africans—who were all involved in selling human beings as slaves. . . .
>
> In America the Aztec Indians practiced blood sacrifices; the Iroquois tortured their captives; the Mound Builders kept slaves. They didn't think that was wrong either.
>
> How could people behave that way? Were they different from us? Not really. Slavery, torture and religious intolerance have been around for a long time. It is always easy to do and think as everybody else does.

Many good, or partly good people, as Hakim points out, have done terrible things to others—usually in the belief that they were doing good. Does this absolve them from the results of their acts? Hakim does not say it does, but she does tell her readers that one of the uses of history is to enable the present to learn from the mistakes of the past.

The First Americans, volume I of *The History of Us*, is available from Oxford University Press, 20001 Evans Rd., Cary, NC 27513 for $7.95, plus $2 shipping and handling (credit card orders, 800-451-7556). Excerpts of two later volumes were published in the *American Educator*, Fall 1990. For a reprint, write Box A, AFT.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1992 by Albert Shanker.

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pher's memories of the McCone fiasco reportedly prompted him to lead the 1991 Christopher Commission investigating the Rodney King beating with extra scrupulousness. The skill with which he conducted the investigation of the Los Angeles Police Department was considerable. His persuasive powers were central in convincing the ten members of the commission to call unanimously for Daryl Gates's resignation, and the report itself offered a devastating indictment of the LAPD.

The McCone report, however exculpatory, prepared Christopher for his next deft career move. This time it required reassuming his liberal mantle in order to serve as deputy to Attorney General Ramsey Clark. Christopher duly showed that he could take a tough line when there was no liability in doing so. During the riot-torn summer of 1967, he toured the war zone in Detroit with Deputy Defense Secretary Cyrus Vance (the beginning of the connection) and defied Governor George Romney in insisting that LBJ call in the 82nd Airborne, however much that might show up the inadequacies of the Michigan National Guard. In 1968, after monitoring the Democratic convention in Chicago, he viewed the disturbances as a police riot, and prosecuted police officers for brutality. But it was not all idealism. During his 1977 confirmation hearings before the Senate, Christopher denied knowledge of U.S. Army spying on anti-war activists. It turns out he was fully aware of it.

WARREN CHRISTOPHER BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

After the Republican victory of 1968, Christopher abandoned politics for legal work. He returned to O'Melveny, a firm that had hardly distinguished itself for its civil rights record. Ninth Circuit Judge Stephen Reinhardt has characterized O'Melveny as "a hotbed of racism into the late 1950s.... Life was hell. It was a very stiff, unimaginative place that didn't tolerate differences. Most people were very similar. It was hard to tell them apart. It was even hard to tell their wives apart." Christopher fit right in. On being nominated for deputy secretary of state in 1976, he resigned from the California Club, whose charter excluded blacks, women and Jews. Upon his departure from State, he promptly rejoined, explaining that "I resigned at that time because I thought it would be embarrassing all around. I rejoined because of my friendships there. I also saw possibilities for change, which have subsequently occurred."

The bond that the experience of touring the blazing streets of Detroit had forged between Vance and Christopher proved enduring. In 1976 Vance tapped Christopher to be his deputy despite his utter lack of foreign policy experience. Vance wanted an assistant who could suppress his own personality and adopt that of his mentor. In Christopher, he found his man. Christopher's familiarity with civil rights issues at home also made it seem natural for him to want to deal with them abroad, matching Carter's emphasis on human rights as a centerpiece of foreign policy.

But Christopher's record was something of a mixed bag. He created and funneled his decisions on human rights through the so-called Christopher Group, which met weekly and comprised representatives from a plethora of State Department bureaus, particularly the newly established Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, which was headed by Patricia Derian, the assistant secretary for human rights. (Carter-watchers will recall her as a firebrand on the issue.) The result was that the swollen group, which was to coordinate foreign aid and human rights policy, was paralyzed by internal bickering. Christopher, who sought to set policy by following what he called "case law" and "calibrated and sequential" instruments for promoting human rights, never saw the need for enunciating clear principles. Instead, the group examined human rights and foreign aid in isolation from foreign policy goals. Christopher even refused to explain to members of the group the bases for his decisions; his clearest proposition was that the

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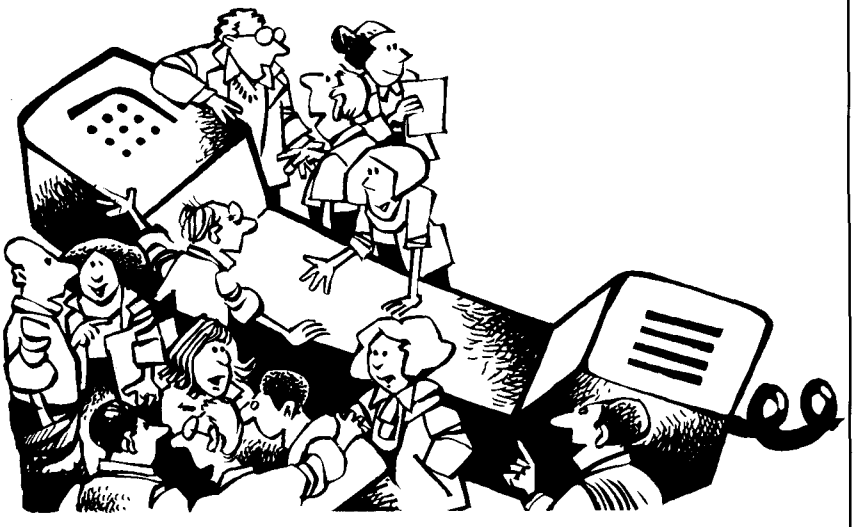

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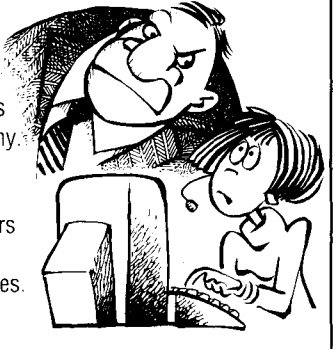

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United States should refrain from publicly calling any regime a "human rights violator." In the end, the policy led to public approval or at least acquiescence in the policies of dictatorships like the Marcos regime. Carter's flip-flops on human rights—and they were legion—shouldn't be blamed on Christopher, but they were consistent with Christopher's confused and inept approach to the issue.

Certainly Christopher had solid accomplishments to his credit. He displayed masterful negotiating skills during the efforts to get the Senate to approve the Panama Canal treaties. He succeeded in watering down the last-minute "DeConcini reservation," which stipulated that in an emergency the United States might seize control of the waterway. And he persuaded Panamanian leader, General Omar Torrijos, to accept this amendment. Christopher also adroitly handled the lifting of the arms embargo on Turkey, as well as the end of state-to-state relations with Taiwan and the sale of F-16s to Saudi Arabia and Egypt. When he was carrying out policies ordered by his superiors, his ability to master detail and understand others' positions earned him diplomatic laurels.

This string of successes gave him reason to suppose that he would be elevated to secretary of state once Vance resigned over the attempt to rescue the hostages. For political reasons Carter passed him over for Senator Edmund Muskie. Christopher dutifully stayed on, but he was privately vexed by the decision: when he later accepted the nomination to be secretary of state, he suddenly gushed that Clinton had made "a dream come true." In 1979 Carter had not wanted to be deprived of Christopher's services in continuing the fine print negotiations over the hostages conducted through Algerian intermediaries. Yet though Christopher has been credited with the eventual release of the hostages, they were principally freed because the mullahs feared the military force that Reagan might unleash. Indeed, Christopher's later interpretation of the crisis betrays a remarkable, lingering obtuseness about what the Iranian revolutionaries were up to. In *American Hostages in Iran*, he commented:

> There is a school of thought which holds that the difficulty and anguish caused to the United States were in themselves an achievement [for the Iranians]. In this view the isolation created and the inability of the Americans to find or force a solution for fourteen months gave the Iranians a psychic satisfaction that outweighed the tangible disadvantages.... I doubt that any nation would find such a psychic ride to be enough compensation for the massive losses Iran suffered.

Other lessons that Christopher drew from the hostage crisis are no less naive. In a speech to the L.A. County Bar Association on May 26, 1981, he claimed the United States has little power to influence the policies of a foreign nation: "A wise nation, however powerful, understands the peril it invites in confronting the will of another people." The most that Christopher would concede was that "the crisis gave us the chance to grow wiser in our dealings with the developing world."

In his other talks, Christopher has simply offered up bromides. In a speech, called "Practical Idealism in Foreign Affairs," delivered at Bates College on June 8, 1981, he opined that "the international values I have described ... restraining the weapons of war, supporting human rights, persisting in the search for peace ... all of these grow out of that same founding idea that each person is sacred."

Christopher's pious generalities do not themselves provide much of a clue to the policies he will follow. Nor does his career. Indeed, it suggests a facility for adapting quickly to new realities. Christopher's tenure under Vance suggests a man capable of submerging his personality much like a lawyer representing his client and portraying himself as the model of probity and rectitude. In this regard, Christopher, the cynosure of the new foreign policy establishment, uncannily resembles the chairman of the old establishment, John McCloy.

But there comes a point in every successful careerist's life when his dream really does come true, and when he no longer has a superior to impress. In foreign policy, Clinton is no expert. In his new position Christopher can return to old patterns or create new ones. Even now the pull of the past is considerable, as Vance exhorts him not to enforce the no-fly zone in Bosnia. So far, the man who boasted in his 1977 confirmation hearing that "Secretary Vance has asked me to prepare myself to serve as his alter ego in the broadest sense" has given no sign that he has emerged from the shadow of his old master. Or that he even wants to.

JACOB HEILBRUNN is University Fellow at the Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University.

Ms. Baird and Mr. Quayle.

DANNY AND ZOE

By Jeffrey Rosen

The drama that culminated in Zoe Baird's selection as attorney general was demeaning to all the players. First, Bill Clinton made it clear that only women need apply. Then Judge Patricia Wald, who deserved to be at the top of a coed list, took herself out of the running. Brooksley Born, a Washington lawyer-activist, lost the job by leaving Clinton cold in her interview—after boasting to friends that she had clinched the nomination. By the time Clinton settled on Baird, a 40-year-old corporate lawyer from Connecticut, he had managed to create the impression that her main qualification was her sex.

The impression is unfair to Baird, a formidable

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lawyer and administrator. And by focusing on Baird's gender while ignoring her ideas, Clinton has inadvertently chosen an attorney general whose strong views often conflict with his own. On questions such as state sovereignty, tort reform, civil justice reform and the environment, Baird's opinions look a lot like those of Vice President Dan Quayle. Although she is no conservative, she is not an orthodox Democrat either; and she shows refreshing signs of confounding the interest groups who demanded that a woman be appointed at all costs.

Baird has worked hard to redefine federal-state relations. In her only academic article, "State Empowerment After Garcia," published in *The Urban Lawyer* in the summer of 1986, she questioned liberal and conservative shibboleths about federalism. She sets out to define a "lasting constitutional basis for protecting state sovereignty" in the wake of a 1985 Supreme Court decision, *Garcia* v. *San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority*. (As partners at O'Melveny and Myers, Baird and William Coleman had represented the transit authority, and lost.) A notorious setback for federalism, *Garcia* suggested that Congress's power over the states was essentially unlimited.

ZOE BAIRD BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Baird proposes three ways of fortifying the states. First, she says courts should not assume that Congress intends to override the states unless it expresses its intentions clearly. Although not original, Baird's proposal was prescient: in 1991 Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote the suggestion into law. Second, Baird argues that the political procedures, rather than the substantive policy decisions, of state governments should be immune from congressional regulation, to keep the channels of democracy open. Again, O'Connor endorsed the suggestion last June. Finally, at her most radical, Baird flirts with the (plausible) possibility that some administrative agencies may be unconstitutional: "I have thought for some time that Congress is ripe for a challenge that it has exceeded its authority to delegate by giving the executive branch legislative functions." The dry language conceals an appealing willingness to rethink from scratch the boundaries of the administrative state.

Reviving the states and restraining the administrative agencies were keystones of the Reagan-Bush legal agenda, and it may seem bizarre for a Democratic attorney general to be toying with Republican heresy. But unlike the Republicans, who used "states' rights" to allow the states to enforce "traditional values" such as discriminating against blacks and gays, Baird proposes "to preserve the dispersal of political power so as to provide greater assurance that tyranny will be avoided and our liberties preserved."

Baird insists that state sovereignty take a back seat, accordingly, when Congress passes legislation under the Fourteenth Amendment to protect individual rights. (Unlike Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, Baird is confident that Congress has the constitutional authority to pass the Freedom of Choice Act.) Baird's innovative approach to federalism is similar to that of Alice Rivlin, slated to be deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, and other contributors to the Progressive Policy Institute's "Mandate for Change," who have called on Clinton to appoint a "federalism czar."

Baird's nomination is being attacked by trial lawyers and public interest groups because of positions she took as a corporate counsel for General Electric, where she lobbied to weaken the federal whistle-blowers law, and at the Aetna Insurance Company, where she championed tort reform. "The nomination is so bad," said Ralph Nader, "that it either bespeaks a Clinton surrender to her powerful patrons, or reveals Clinton's intention to go soft on corporate crime and abuse." As general counsel of Aetna, Baird argued in a speech last March that "the tort system is having a very debilitating effect on America's competitiveness." She then praised Quayle for moving "tort reform to a level of visibility and credibility that it really hasn't had for years." (It is not clear how Baird and Quayle reconcile their support for federally mandated

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tort reform with their concern for state sovereignty.)

There are differences, however, between the tort reforms endorsed by Baird and Quayle. Under Baird's stewardship, Aetna opposed the most controversial Quayle proposal: the "English Rule," in which the loser of a lawsuit pays the winner's costs. Nevertheless, Baird and Quayle both supported the narrowly defeated reform bill, sponsored by Senators Jay Rockefeller and John Danforth, that would have required trial judges, rather than juries, to determine the size of punitive damage awards. Baird's support for tort reform puts her at odds with Clinton, who attacked Quayle's proposals as "dramatically tilted toward big polluters, manufacturers and insurance companies and against consumers and victims." But there is a bipartisan middle ground on tort reform that was obscured in the election rhetoric, and tort reformers hope that she will resist pressure in her hearings to backpedal from her principles.

Baird's positions on environmental issues are equally controversial with environmentalists, including, potentially, the vice president-elect. In a meeting with the Quayle Council working group on February 28, 1991, Baird proposed "the creation of a study group to assess the Superfund liability system." (Superfund is the federal law that establishes a clean-up program for toxic waste sites, like Love Canal.) Baird cited a study Aetna had commissioned from the Rand Corporation that blamed the slow pace and high cost of the clean-up on the fact that a single company can be held retroactively liable for environmental damage caused by many companies. "The bottom line on the Superfund law is that it's very long on litigation and very short on clean-up," Baird said in a speech last March.

Not all of Baird's views are at odds with Clinton's. She led a valiant crusade to base attorney's fees at Aetna on performance rather than billable hours, recognizing the perverse incentives that hourly billing creates. And she made a concerted effort to recruit "the best" women and minorities, although her vague speeches on the subject provide no details of her views on the contentious questions of affirmative action policy.

What kind of attorney general would Baird make? Administering bureaucracies is one of her passions: she points repeatedly in her speeches to her experience supervising 120 lawyers at Aetna. More importantly, she seems likely to heal the Justice Department after twelve years of virulent partisanship. In a 1981 article in *Legal Times*, she and co-author Terry Adamson urged the new attorney general, William French Smith, to embrace "the doctrines of independence and neutrality for the department conceived by President Ford's attorney general, Edward Levi." They advised Smith to continue a practice that the Carter appointees had found to be a nuisance: logging all telephone calls and visits and making the records public the next day. And they called on Smith to "resist pressure to replace the Carter appointees with Republican choices." (Smith ignored the advice.)

Baird's high-minded vision of the department clashes with the more ideological attitude of some of the advisers she inherited from the transition team, who spent the past two months trooping through the Justice Department, making lists of suspect career appointees. Baird is also likely to ignore much of the policy advice she is receiving. The transition adviser for the attorney general's office, for example, is Emma Jordan of Georgetown Law School. As Stuart Taylor reported in *Legal Times*, Jordan suggested recently that because blacks score lower than whites on standardized tests, law schools should consider abandoning the tests to avoid "the stigmatizing effect of equating merit and high test scores."

Baird's scholarly qualifications should not be exaggerated. Although an egghead in comparison to William French Smith or Ed Meese, she is no Edward Levi. But her administrative competence and her heretical views could push the Democrats toward worthwhile reforms that they are inclined to resist. In demanding the appointment of a woman, any woman, the interest groups appear to have gotten more than they bargained for. •

The New Democrats and race.

THE BUBBAS

By C. Vann Woodward

Two outstanding examples of American presidents from the South presiding over a national race crisis come to mind—neither of them very reassuring. They are the two Johnsons, Andrew from Tennessee and Lyndon from Texas, just a century apart. Both of them came to office as the consequence of an assassination. Andrew Johnson presided over the first Reconstruction, 1865-69, Lyndon Johnson over the second, 1965-69. The racial policies of the two could hardly have been more different, yet both came to grief and ended in frustration.

The Tennessean took the side of Southern resistance to the Republicans, then in the flush of the Civil War victory, some of whom sought to secure equal rights for the freedmen. He struck an alliance with Northern sympathizers and supported reactionary and conservative forces in the South. Outmaneuvered by his opponents in Congress, Andrew Johnson wound up under impeachment and came within one vote of being convicted and thrown out of office.

The Texas Johnson, 100 years later, virtually wrote off the vote of his native region and sought with all his formidable powers to outdo the new Yankee crusaders in behalf of the black minority. And this he did, outstripping them all in legislation enacted and policies pro-

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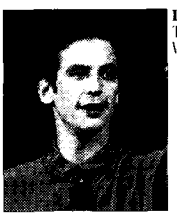

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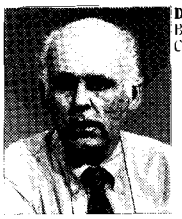

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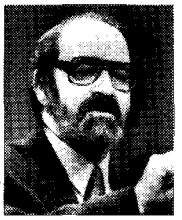

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claimed to that end. These included not only the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but also, in the turbulent years following, the passing of 181 of the 200 bills Johnson sent to Congress to implement his War on Poverty and Great Society programs.

Those four years, beginning with the riot in Los Angeles in 1965, also witnessed the most violent black revolts in American history—150 major riots, with looters setting city slums aflame from coast to coast. But what paralyzed the Johnson administration and left it in ruins was another crusade entirely, the one in Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson did not learn his commitment to the myth of American invincibility and innocence on the banks of the Padernales. Nor was it there that he picked up white guilt as a political motivation. Those were Yankee burdens he somehow felt obliged to shoulder when he became president.

And now comes another Southern president, this one from Arkansas, and along with him comes a vice president from Tennessee. In view of the gap of a generation between the age of the incoming and that of the outgoing president, the important transition would seem to be more one of generational than regional significance. Yet the regional identity of the two young Southerners is undeniable: one with twelve years as governor of his state; the other as representative and then senator from his, the only senatorial candidate of modern times to carry all ninety-five Tennessee counties. No omens of disaster and frustration such as those that overtook the racial policies of the two presidents Johnson have as yet appeared for the Clinton administration. They may well appear later from several quarters, but hardly from the traditional Southern racial bias. Bill Clinton seems to have freed himself from regional identifications of that kind.

The double Southern ticket appeared to have been neither as much of an advantage within the South nor as much of a handicap outside as might have been expected. By one means or another Clinton contrived to appear a national candidate and to make his "new covenant" convey, as he put it, "a sense that we are all in this together." That was certainly intended to embrace racial minorities, and they understood it that way. But his racial pronouncements remain restrained even if his behavioral gestures—in black crowds, churches and face-to-face encounters—speak out more clearly than his rhetoric.

Clinton and Al Gore carried 90 percent of the black vote in the election. That was more than twice the percentage of the white vote they received in their own region. In view of this fact, the scarcity of Clinton's pronouncements and appeals on racial issues, and the risks he seemed to take, call for special attention. Perhaps the most conspicuous risks were his dealings with Jesse Jackson. Clinton's rebuke of Jackson over the Sister Souljah incident was a clear challenge to the growing white tolerance for black racism. In Clinton and Gore's book, *Putting People First*, they list and address thirty-one "crucial issues" in alphabetical order from "Agriculture" to "Women," but Race is not on the list. The only direct reference to the black minority is the pledge, "Oppose racial quotas." This was not intended by the authors, nor understood by black voters, as a retreat into traditional policies of racial exclusion. It affirmed, rather, Clinton's avowed emphasis on enforcement of civil rights against racial discrimination and his resistance to preferential discrimination by race. That does not appear to have diminished black identification with Clinton and his cause.

Black intellectuals for years have worried away at the paradox of an enduring black attachment to the South, to part of a culture shared with Southern whites for more than three centuries. The sharing, for all its bitter past, has furthered a capacity of the two races to understand one another that is peculiar to the South in recent years. In tapping that experience Clinton may bring to the racial rift a healing influence that a Democrat from another region would lack. Attention to the paradox was diverted by the black exodus of midcentury, which for the first time in our history placed half of the black population outside the South. Then the ebb tide of returning migration set in and has already raised the South's share to 57 percent of the total. The percentage is still rising. That plus black rapport with the Clinton-Gore team have revived speculation among thoughtful black writers about the old paradox.

In the opinion of Orlando Patterson, professor of sociology at Harvard, "The election of Bill Clinton along with his running mate, another young Southerner, may mark a watershed ... for all who feel insecure and alienated from the American dream." He quotes Clinton on "the new spirit of community, a sense that we are all in this together," and welcomes his omission of any special case for black Americans. "In spite of his rhetoric," writes Patterson, "African Americans are strongly drawn to the president-elect.... Mr. Clinton's program, if it works, will encompass African Americans as Americans rather than as blacks. But they are drawn to him precisely because, among whites, only a regenerate Southerner can truly empathize with the full horror of our racial heritage."

In 1990 Shelby Steele addressed the subject of white guilt in *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America.* He speaks of "the unacknowledged white need for redemption," or at least "the appearance of redemption which requires only that society, in the name of development, seem to be paying back its former victims with preferences"—such as racial entitlements, affirmative action and quotas. He sees these measures as essentially for the relief of white problems rather than those of blacks, relief of conscience, relief from the knowledge of ill-gotten advantage, relief from "being white in America." For most of them this guilt is no great obsession or anguish, but one from which they would gladly gain restored innocence at no great cost.

To Steele the policy of racial preference is "a dubious reward for being black," probably produces "more bad than good," strongly implies racial inferiority and

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teaches that whites "can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves ... an incentive to be reliant on others just as we are struggling for self-reliance." In his view, "no matter how it is justified in the light of day," preferential treatment "subjects blacks to a midnight of self-doubt." The black power revolt from Martin Luther King Jr.'s rule of nonviolence and racial integration and the turn toward militance and racial separation "evoked white guilt" and thrived upon it.

Like Patterson, Steele makes an exception of the South. Recalling the saying of blacks in the 1960s that "at least in the South you knew where you stood," he acknowledges an ambiguity in this and continues:

> But I think one of the things we meant by this—at the time—was that the South had little investment in its racial innocence and that this was very liberating in an ironical sort of way. It meant there would be no entangling complications with white need. It gave us back ourselves. The selfishly guilty white person is drawn to what blacks least like in themselves—their suffering, victimization and dependency. This is no good for anyone—black or white.

To what degree Clinton shares the attitudes and immunities attributed to regenerate whites of his region by Patterson and Steele is impossible to say. At least we have reasonable assurance that he does not share the racial attitudes more commonly attributed to the white South. As for his freedom from white guilt and from investments in racial innocence, we have a few hints worth considering.

Without specifically disavowing them, Clinton avoids the roles of paternalist and patron and the posture of white guilt. He appears firm in support of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibiting racial discrimination but, as pointed out already, rejects its use for discrimination in racial preference. He promises that his administration "will actively work to protect the civil rights of all Americans" but makes no separate case for the rights of racial minorities. That follows from his view that "there can be no 'them' in America. There's only us." Not "two nations" but one.

With the same assumption he treats all the "Crucial Issues": Children, Cities, Civil Rights, Crime and on through Health, Housing and Women. Clinton will undoubtedly be challenged by sincere advocates of preferential discrimination—depending on how far his administration goes in reversing the policy. There are likely to be conflicts to be resolved between the old-style Democrats (like his wife, Hillary, and her close friend Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund), who strive to expand welfare benefits, job training, free health care and help for disadvantaged black people; and the new-style Democrats (like Clinton himself and his friends at the Democratic Leadership Council), who seek "new ways to fulfill old commitments," and speak of "balancing rights and responsibilities" and of learning from mistakes of their past and the experience of conservatives. On the whole, however, Clinton clearly leans away from black dependency on white paternalism and toward black initiative and self-reliance.

During the selection of Cabinet nominees Clinton responded with unusual vehemence to criticism by women's groups, calling them bean counters. Although his eventual appointments have proved his concern for including previously excluded or neglected minorities, he has resisted identification with quotas and insists on treating the policy as ending discrimination. The distinction proves elusive to some. But if it provides justice under another name, the objection will likely be forgotten before long. •

Sorry, Ross, they're not in the Smithsonian.

SPRINGTIME FOR LOBBYISTS

By Jacob Weisberg

Like most of his fellow lobbyists, Frank Mankiewicz isn't much worried about Bill Clinton's threat to reform his universe. From his perch high above the Potomac, in a sun-soaked office in Georgetown's Washington Harbor, Mankiewicz comments that the proposed rules are "pretty good." The lifetime prohibition on lobbying for foreign governments after leaving the administration seems "a little strong." But, adds the man who did p.r. for BCCI, with a glance at one of his many items of RFK memorabilia, "they may actually deter people from going into government for reason of making money."

A cynic might point out that Mankiewicz has no cause for alarm. The new rules contain nothing but good news for him and his firm, Hill & Knowlton. The heart of Clinton's proposal is a requirement that political appointees not lobby their departments for five years

continued on page 36

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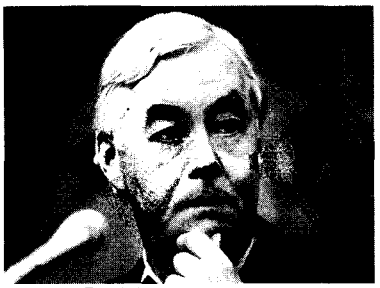
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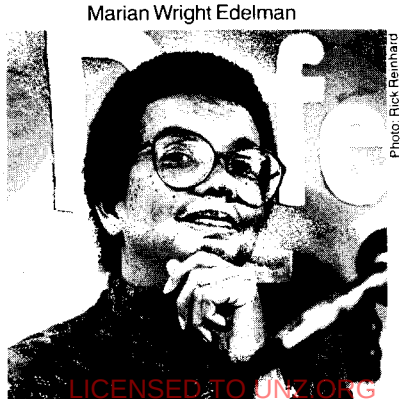
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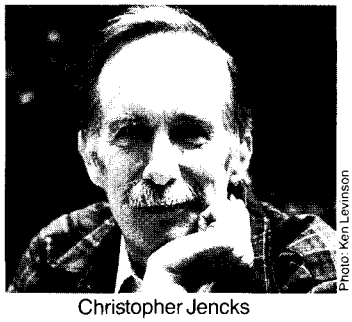

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after they leave government. For old Democratic hands like Mankiewicz who aren't going in, this means there won't be a new generation of first-term alumni coming out with better connections to sell until about 1999, at the soonest. Meanwhile, Mankiewicz and his partners are free to charge clients $350 an hour to lobby their friends in the new administration, including their colleagues Thomas Hoog and Howard Paster, who are on leave from the firm to work on the transition.

Paster, who heads Hill & Knowlton's Washington office and is expected to become Clinton's chief lobbyist on Capitol Hill, is the likely beneficiary of one of the many loopholes in the new rules. If he serves and departs, he will be pledged not to lobby the White House for five years, and for life on behalf of foreign clients. But, as Mankiewicz points out, "Howard would not be prevented from lobbying on the Hill." In other words, assuming he gets the congressional relations job, Paster could continue to work the House and Senate for paying clients, including China, Turkey and other governments that use torture, which, according to a recent study by the Center for Public Integrity, have paid his firm $14 million since 1991. And Paster will, of course, be able to use his knowledge of how the White House works to direct lobbying by others at H&K.

Is President Clinton about to change the mercenary culture of Washington? Don't bet on it. In fact, times could hardly be better for lobbyists, especially Democratic ones. The new rules almost certainly will slow the revolving door between government and private-sector lobbying. They should make influence-peddlers more circumspect about appearances. And, in concert with the campaign finance reform and disclosure laws that transition official Michael Waldman says Clinton is intent on, they may make it harder for special interests to circumvent the democratic process. But ultimately, as lawyer-lobbyist Stuart Eizenstat notes, "It's hard to change the culture of Washington with any set of rules." To change the culture, Clinton must do something about the ethic that allows Eizenstat, who thinks of himself as a decent man, and is a decent man, to set up shop as a lobbyist without guilt, fear for his reputation or concern about his future chances for a job in government. Instead, Clinton has winked at his own reforms by bringing a fleet of fixers with him to Washington. If he really wants to restore the public trust that has been eroded by the abuse of connections, Clinton will need more than rules. He'll have to choose more ethical people—maybe even find different friends.

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The history of lobbying reform to date is one of unintended consequences and lax enforcement. In 1946 Congress passed a law requiring disclosure, but it was eviscerated by the Supreme Court on First Amendment grounds in 1954 and has been a dead letter since. In 1978 President Carter pushed through the Ethics in Government Act, which required a one-year cooling-off period before former high officials could lobby the administration. But that law too was gutted, first by Congress, then by the courts. Its test came with the indictments of Reagan officials Michael Deaver and Lyn Nofziger. One independent counsel found the law was unusable against Deaver. A different prosecutor won a conviction of Nofziger for lobbying Ed Meese on behalf of Wed-tech before a year was up. But the verdict was overturned on the grounds that the act suggested Nofziger had to know he was breaking the law. To date, no high official has *ever* been punished for post-employment influence-peddling.

The Nofziger reversal brought Congress to the point of reforming the law yet again at the end of Ronald Reagan's second term. The 1989 Ethics in Government Act was designed to eliminate the vagueness seized upon by the Court of Appeals and to fill other gaps. Most importantly, it applied a one-year revolving-door rule to the legislative branch. Congress remains the locus of the most brazen influence-peddling in Washington—the place where former members and staffers of the House Ways and Means Committee lobby against tax laws they themselves helped pass.

Though the 1989 law has yet to be tested in court, it has already brought unanticipated problems. For example, Michael Barone claimed in a *U.S. News & World Report* column that Clinton spokesman George Stephanopoulos, a former aide to House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, might have committed a felony by contacting members of Congress on behalf of the campaign before he had been gone a year. Stephanopoulos says that he would have had to have been paid $92,000 a year by Congress to be covered (he only earned $90,000), and that he would have had to try to affect legislation, which he didn't. But as Representative Barney Frank, the sponsor of the 1989 law, points out, a candidate should be allowed to coordinate his plans with his allies in Congress. The problem is, no one thought of such an

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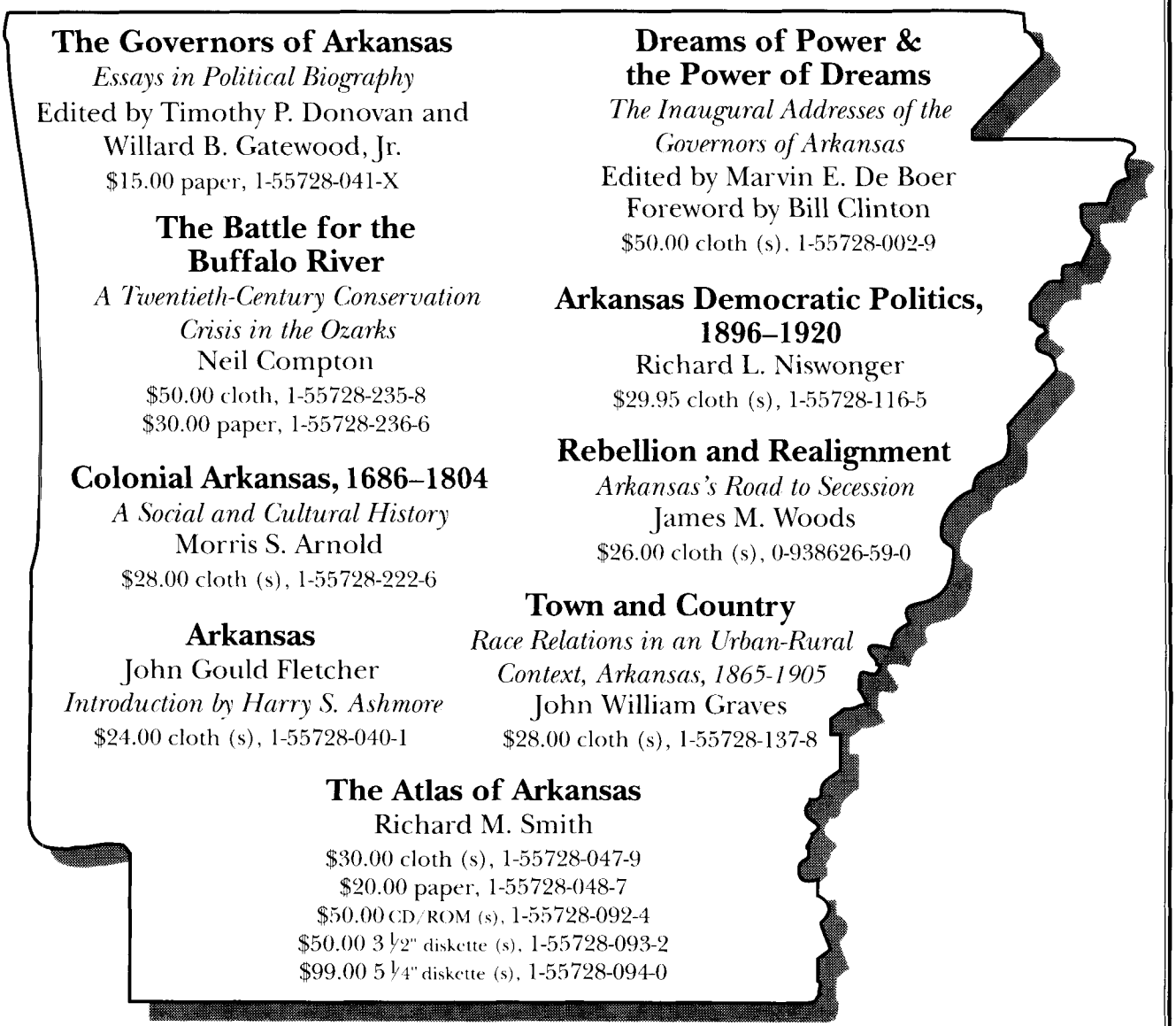

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exemption at the time. Because laws cannot, as a matter of constitutionality and fairness, distinguish between non-profit and for-profit lobbying, a Stephanopoulos is as likely to run afoul of the rules as someone who is cashing in.

Nor has it slowed the passage from the Hill to K Street. Indeed, firms that were well-connected to the Reagan and Bush administrations are busy rushing prominent Democrats who retired or lost elections in 1992. "Black, Manafort & Stone, Robinson Lake, Timmons, most of the Republican firms are out looking for big-name Democrats," says Bob Beckel, whose own firm was recently bought by the already Democrat-heavy Cassidy & Associates. "They're getting harder and harder to come by." Cassidy also recently hired former House Ways and Means member Marty Russo, who lost an Illinois primary, along with his former chief of staff, Bob Macari, despite the fact that both are restricted for a year. Timmons and company landed John Orlando, chief of staff of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. And the law firm of Winston & Strawn wooed and won Beryl Anthony Jr. as its lobbying director. Anthony was a member of Ways and Means, raised money for his former colleagues as chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee until 1990 and is even from Arkansas. Firms are still competing for Dennis Eckart, a Ways and Means retiree from Ohio who left the House out of disgust with the "system."

Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly, the Republican-dominated firm that pioneered lucrative new conflicts of interest in the 1980s, is trying especially hard to change its complexion by contributing to the Democratic National Committee and offering six-figure salaries to Democrats. The firm recently signed on Michael Lewan, Senator Joseph Lieberman's top aide. "I didn't hire him because he was going to lobby his boss," says Peter Kelly of the firm. Of course, Lewan doesn't have to lobby his boss. As Lieberman's top fundraiser, his influence will remain invisible but strong. Should explicit contact be needed in the next twelve months, others at the firm can do the talking; Lieberman will be aware of the connection. Meanwhile, Lewan is free to lobby other friends on the Hill.

The need to curb the power of special interests was a major theme of the presidential campaign. Jerry Brown and Pat Buchanan both fulminated against the revolving door, while Ross Perot blamed "all these fellows with thousand-dollar suits and alligator shoes" for the loss of American jobs and threatened to put them in the Smithsonian. Clinton began echoing this theme, decrying the power of "influence-peddlers," especially former trade representatives, whom he accused of "selling out for lucrative lobbying paychecks from foreign competitors." In his campaign manifesto, *Putting People First*, Clinton called for a pledge from top appointees not to lobby. Soon after the election, he insisted transition officials pledge to wait six months before lobbying the agencies for which they are helping make plans. And on December 9 Clinton issued a detailed plan that forgos criminal penalties in favor of suing for improper earnings as a violation of contract.

In announcing the rules, Warren Christopher said that Clinton "intends to change the way business is done in Washington." It's true that the mere act of promulgating and discussing them has sent a signal to lobbyists. And revolving-door restrictions should prove effective, at least at preventing Ron Brown and Mickey Kantor from emulating Deaver and Nofziger after a few years. After five years out, their influence is likely to be dissipated, even if Clinton (or Gore) is still in office.

But even those who drafted the code have doubts about whether it will prove effective. The ACLU makes a persuasive case that it infringes on the First Amendment. It may be impossible to enforce. And Chuck Lewis of the Center for Public Integrity points out that it is riddled with "all kinds of loopholes—enough to drive a fleet of trucks through." First, the rules apply to only 1,100 top appointees. Civil servants, uniformed military personnel and many lawyers are exempt. Second, only direct contact—not staging behind-the-scenes lobbying campaigns—is restricted. Third, the rules only restrain connections based on employment. (Much influence, of course, is based on friendship, family relations, campaign contributions, honoraria, gifts and favors.) Fourth, Congress, where the worst abuses take place, will be far less restricted than the executive branch.

The rules are also likely to have some unfortunate side effects. One is that they will add new growth to the thicket of overlapping conflict-of-interest laws and regulations, which in the executive branch are already so complicated that, according to Stephen Potts, director of the Office of Government Ethics, "even an employee who sincerely wants to follow the rules doesn't have the remotest chance of understanding them." They also proscribe much that should be legitimate: a director of the ACLU or NAACP who joins the Justice Department and returns to his old job would be banned from offering advice to his successors for five years.

Another consequence may be that talented people will be deterred from serving in the government, because the rules will make it too hard for them to go back to their old jobs. Attorneys who represent clients before the alphabet soup of regulatory agencies will be less willing to lend their expertise to government. For example, John Olson, a lawyer who has been mentioned for the Securities and Exchange Commission, says he thinks the rules are well motivated, but that if asked, he "would have to give a lot of thought as to whether I would be able to practice my profession afterward."

Lastly, the guidelines are xenophobic: trade negotiators are specifically banned from representing foreign clients, and all high-level appointees are banned for life from representing foreign governments. Why is it worse to work for the Canadian government than for Siemens or the National Rifle Association? And why is it inimical

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We need to reduce immigration to the level of emigration (out-migration) so that immigration will no longer contribute to our population growth. That would require halting **illegal** immigration, and reducing **legal** immigration to a comprehensive ceiling of 200,000 a year, including all relatives and refugees. Then, immigration would be roughly balanced with emigration.

We now allow roughly 700,000 legal immigrants to come here each year. Their numbers are swelled by perhaps 300,000 **illegal** immigrants.

Advocates of Massive Immigration Are Wrong!

There are powerful forces that fight tooth and nail not only to keep immigration at the present high level, but to increase it. Among them are employers who want low-wage labor, ethnic groups whose leaders seek greater political power, and humanitarians who believe in virtually open borders.

They also include pro-growth advocates who believe that an ever-growing labor force, fueled by immigration, is necessary to achieve their goal of an ever-increasing GNP. That goal, in the real world of environmental and resource limits, is a recipe for disaster.

How Can We Best Help Others?

Beyond any question, the United States must maintain the humane policies toward immigrants and refugees that have characterized its past.

But we need to express our compassion in an intelligent way. Our guiding principle should be to do the most good for the greatest number. Our priority should be to improve living conditions in the developing countries, rather than to allow vast numbers of their citizens to settle here.

World population is growing by some 90 million a year, and almost all of that growth occurs in the developing countries. We cannot possibly allow more than a tiny fraction of those millions to come here. What can we do to help all those who have no choice but to remain at home?

One thing is crystal clear. The problems of the underdeveloped countries are beyond solution by emigration. To pretend otherwise is simply self-delusion.

Nothing can permanently improve living conditions in these countries unless they first halt their population growth, the root cause of their poverty and environmental degradation.

Those who assert that eradicating poverty is a prerequisite for halting population growth have the process just backwards. Only after halting their population growth can developing countries even begin to bring their standard of living up to an adequate level.

If we are genuinely concerned with their welfare, we should spare no effort or expense to help those nations that are prepared to make a determined effort to halt, and eventually to reverse, their population growth.

We Need A Sensible U.S. Immigration Policy

We cannot continue to allow our national immigration policy to be dictated by special interest groups who pursue their own agendas without regard for the broad national interest.

Our immigration policy should be an integral part of a national population policy aimed at halting, and then reversing, our population growth, so that U.S. population can eventually be stabilized at a lower, more sustainable level.

As Americans, our first obligation, to ourselves and to our children and grandchildren, is to restore and preserve the land we have inherited. In shaping our immigration policy, our top priority must be our own national interest, and the welfare of present and future generations of Americans.

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to American interests to request freer imports on behalf of Hitachi but not to seek protection for the domestic textile industry? The rules reflect the conflation of the issue of influence-peddling with trade policy and Japan. The confusion is principally the product of a book by Pat Choate, *Agents of Influence*, and of pressure from Representative Marcy Kaptur of Ohio, who thinks Japanese competition is unfair. The result is that the regulations are strictest when it comes to the kind of lobbying that is usually less an abuse of power than a swindle of naive Third World clients, who think someone like Edward van Kloberg, a convicted felon who has worked for Iraq, Burma and Ceausescu's Romania, can help open doors for them.

Real change in the culture of Washington might or might not involve the kind of revolving-door rules Clinton has emphasized. But what it clearly does require are three crucial elements: campaign finance reform, lobbying disclosure and most important, a sense of shame. Campaign finance reform is a perennial and tedious topic. It is, however, increasingly critical as the cost of congressional campaigns rises. Clinton has endorsed the campaign finance bill vetoed by George Bush last year, which provided limited public financing of congressional campaigns. But it will be hard to get a new bill through, particularly one that regulates soft money to the parties (of which the Democrats took $29 million in 1992).

As for disclosure, if lobbyists had to make public what they really do, they might be embarrassed into not doing much of it. It would also create a political remedy for those on the receiving end. But the two existing statutes are next to useless. The basic one covers only those who spend most of their time lobbying members of Congress directly, not lawyers who lobby, those who lobby staff or those who lobby the executive. Thus only about 6,000 of an estimated 80,000 Washington lobbyists are registered, and even they seldom disclose how much they are paid, by whom or for what. The Justice Department views the law as "ineffective, inadequate and unenforceable," and has brought no charges under it since 1954. The other law is the Foreign Agents Registration Act, passed in 1938 to flush out Nazi propagandists. It requires more detailed disclosure but exempts lawyers and those paid by domestic subsidiaries. Despite rampant violations, there were no cases filed under FARA in the 1980s.

Clinton endorsed disclosure reform in *Putting People First*, and aides say he supports something like the bill sponsored by Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, which failed last year but will probably come up again. Though Levin's bill closes many loopholes, it would eliminate all criminal penalties and actually loosen some disclosure requirements. Lobbyists would no longer have to report specific contact with members of Congress, or say how much they spent taking them to dinner at Jean-Louis or duck hunting on the Chesapeake. The effect would be to shield those being lobbied—in other words, Congress—from scrutiny. A better idea is proposed by Geoffrey Hazard, an ethics specialist at Yale Law School: require officials to keep logs of outside communication, and open them to public inspection. This would keep both lobbyist and lobbyee on guard, and subject officials to a political sanction rather than a legal one.

But the easiest, cheapest and most effective remedy is shame. It's also the one Clinton has decisively passed up by appointing fixers like Brown and Kantor. "The most basic thing you need to do," says Lewis of the Center for Public Integrity, "is don't appoint influence-peddlers. If you were really worried about it, you wouldn't bring those people in." Transition officials defend these choices on background by quoting FDR's supposed explanation for naming Wall Street manipulator Joseph Kennedy to head the SEC: you need a thief to catch a thief. But the analogy doesn't hold up. Brown isn't being appointed ethics czar, he's being appointed commerce secretary. And unlike Roosevelt and Kennedy, neither Clinton nor Brown acknowledges that what Brown has been doing is unethical and should be forbidden.

Brown represents entrepreneurial government at its worst. After leaving the staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1981, he joined the law firm Patton, Boggs & Blow, where he immediately began lobbying his old committee on behalf of electronics manufacturers. While working on behalf of Baby Doc Duvalier in Haiti, as well as Zairean, Guatemalan, Japanese and other interests, he also served as chief counsel to the Democratic National Committee. In 1989 he tapped his firm's resources to mount a campaign for DNC chair. Brown claimed in a 1991 letter to TNR that he had given up client work at Patton Boggs to avoid the appearance of a conflict. But last year the firm paid him $580,000 for work that included a trip to Japan, about which Brown has refused to answer questions. He has also used his position to obtain lucrative bond work from the District of Columbia and benefits-management contracts from a number of cities. During the Democratic convention, Patton Boggs threw a huge party for Brown, to which it invited current and prospective clients. Another lobbying firm recently hired his son.

Brown is not the only inhabitant of this netherworld. Kantor, the designated U.S. trade representative, briefed his firm's current and prospective clients, including Philip Morris and General Electric, on the administration's plans—in October (see "FOB Story" by Mickey Kaus, TNR, December 28, 1992). Kantor's law partner, Charles Manatt, a former head of the DNC himself, has just signed up major banking interests, which are pushing for various forms of deregulation, on the strength of the connection to the new administration. Vernon Jordan, co-head of the transition, is one of Washington's best-connected lobbyists, and Samuel Berger, Clinton's deputy national security adviser, has worked on behalf of Japanese and domestic clients as a partner in the law firm Hogan & Hartson. Other lobby-

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TREATMENT FOR THE NATION'S AILING HEALTH CARE SYSTEM: TRUE MANAGED COMPETITION WORKS FOR EVERY AMERICAN

The Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) shares President Bill Clinton's commitment to assuring all Americans cost-effective, quality health care. The HLC is a broad-based group of more than 50 health care industry CEOs — leaders from the hospital, insurance, pharmaceutical, medical technology, and physician and nursing sectors — who support meaningful, fundamental reform of our nation's health care system.

We are confident that comprehensive reform through what is known as "managed competition" will deliver the radical changes America's health care system needs. Yet significant structural reforms will not come quickly or easily. Much like the economic changes discussed by President Clinton at last month's summit, we must resist the temptation to embrace the "quick fix" to achieve short term results. Permanent, workable reforms will require sustained commitment and patience as doctors, hospitals, insurance companies, patients, employers and governments all change the way we deliver, receive and pay for health care.

A consensus is now emerging that managed competition is a workable solution to the nation's health care crisis. This consensus reaches across the health care industry to the nation's governors and mayors, to the public interest groups and leading health care academicians. As it continues to grow, it will give President Clinton the momentum he needs to bring a new system of health care to the American people.

It is important to note that within this diverse group, most also believe that federally imposed global budgeting ultimately will undermine health care reform and prove counterproductive. Competition, based on cost, quality and consumer satisfaction, among the providers of health care services will force cost cuts and spur efficiencies. Xerox and many other companies utilizing managed care have already begun to achieve these cost savings. We urge, therefore, that a system modeled on managed competition be adopted without the costly overlay of federal bureaucracy put in place to impose rigid price controls. Such policies would strike at the heart of our shared goal to provide all Americans with affordable quality health care and eliminate the incentives essential to assuring equal access to the best quality health care for the best price.

Market-based reform does work. While some of the ideas of managed competition may be new to the country, they are not new to us. Managed competition in its true form free of costly and cumbersome government bureaucracy, can lead us toward America's 21st century health care system. We salute the leadership of President Clinton and stand ready to work with him to bring this system into reality.

PAM BAILEY, President
Healthcare Leadership Council

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What Others Have to Say About Marketplace Managed Competition:

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Clearly the nation cannot sustain the current rate of growth in health care costs. If the system is expanded to include universal coverage without reform, the cost problems will be greatly exacerbated. While people may argue about the final target for an acceptable rate of growth in costs, the nation must develop a health care system which, over the next several years, will move growth in costs toward a long term sustainable level.

The kinds of structural changes that must occur in the health care system to control costs cannot be effective unless and until every legal resident has health insurance. Universal access to health care is both a moral imperative and an invaluable cost containment tool.

We support a managed competitive approach to health care with the caveat that attention must be paid to ensuring that the approach will work in both rural and inner city areas.

Even if a federal framework is established ... a real possibility that the federal government will attempt cost control by capping the federal medical entitlement programs. A cap only on federal health care entitlement programs will most certainly continue to shift costs to the private sector and local governments and reduce real benefits to real people."

— Colorado Governor Roy Romer

Excerpt from statement of representatives of the National Governors' Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, Council of State Governments, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, International City/County Management Association, American Business Conference, Committee for Economic Development, National Federation of Independent Businesses and The Business Roundtable at a meeting on Health Care Cost Containment, December 15, 1992

"The Mayo Foundation believes that the managed competition model, if developed appropriately, can serve as the basis for a health care system based on value: high quality care at an affordable price."

— Robert Waller, M.D., Chairman, Board of Governors, Mayo Clinic

"(The President) will have to make good on his promise to submit a coherent reform (plan). When Mr. Clinton delivers his plan, it can be judged by three questions:

- Will it cover everyone, including the poor and chronically ill?
- Will it rely on competition rather than bureaucracy to rein in costs and monitor outcomes?
- Will individuals be compelled to make cost-conscious choices among responsible health care plans?

If the answer to all three questions is yes, President Clinton will have delivered a plan that deserves to be called managed competition, deserves to be passed and deserves the relieved gratitude of a country so long tormented by a health care system that costs too much and serves too few."

— "The Answer: Managed Competition: How to Make it Work"
The New York Times, **December 3, 1992**

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"As a physician, committed to ensuring access to affordable, quality health care, I realize there are many issues you must address as you undertake this reform. Government dictated health care budgets or "global budgets" or price controls inevitably lead to less access, fewer choices and lower quality of care because they will result in rationing of health care services.

I believe that controlling costs without jeopardizing quality of care and continued medical innovation will be critical to the development of successful health care policy."

— HAMILTON E. HOLMES, M.D.
Medical Director, Grady Memorial Hospital
Associate Dean, Emory University School of Medicine

"President Clinton:

As founder and President of the Allergy and Asthma Network/ Mothers of Asthmatics, Inc. and as a parent of a child with asthma, I am gratified that you intend to make health care a priority in your administration.... In my daughter's lifetime, several new medications have been developed to treat her condition. Because of the newer medications that continue to be brought to market, her quality of life is extremely high and her medical bills are comparatively low. Would this be happening in a price controlled environment? I really don't think so."

— NANCY SANDER, President
Allergy and Asthma Network
Mothers of Asthmatics, Inc.

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Managed competition in health care delivery relies on incentives and rational organization in a decentralized and pluralistic private market rather than centralized command and control regulation by government.

It respects American cultural preferences for limited government, voluntary action, decentralized decision-making, individual choice, multiple competing approaches, pluralism, and personal and local responsibility.

What about cost and quality? Far more often than not, in medical care quality and economy go hand-in-hand. The correct diagnosis made promptly, the appropriate procedure done proficiently are best for the patient and the payer. Mistakes cost money. Managed competition would give purchasers and consumers far better quality-related information than they have had before.

"The new administration's goal should be to achieve comprehensive health care reform and universal coverage without imposing public price controls and bureaucratic budgeting mechanisms on the U.S. health system."

— JEREMY D. ROSNER
Mandate For Change
Public Policy Institute

How can we know this will work? All the pieces of a managed care/managed competition model are in actual practice somewhere. The challenge is to put 'best practices' together in one complete managed competition system.

We know some types of managed care can cut cost substantially. RAND found Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound cut cost 28 percent compared to fee-for-service, and they did it without competition or cost-conscious buyers. Their medical director has stated they could have cut costs much more if there had been incentives to do so. Many other non-experimental comparisons show similar savings. We do not have similar controlled experiments to evaluate the effectiveness of modern selective information-intensive individual practice HMOs like US Health Care Systems and QualMed. But we do see them competing effectively with prepaid group practice HMOs.

We know there are wide variations in costs for many procedures; for example, four-fold variations in the price of open-heart surgery. The best producers have the lowest costs. We know there are wide variations in the practice patterns of apparently well qualified doctors. In managed competition, health plans would have powerful incentives to pick the high quality low-cost providers.

We know that when given responsible choices, people choose value for money."

— Professor ALAIN C. ENTHOVEN, Stanford University
Considered the "father of managed competition"

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The National Business Coalition Forum on Health is committed to national health care reform through managed competition. As our more than fifty member coalitions representing hundreds of companies with millions of employees and dependents are successfully demonstrating, managed competition offers the greatest guarantee of health care choice and quality at the very best price possible.

It does this by allowing market forces to work. Joining together as larger cooperative units rather than as smaller, single entities, our coalition members can dramatically increase their purchasing power in the health care marketplace. They can negotiate terms and prices more favorable to them and to their employees. They can insist on good information about the comparative prices and quality of the doctors and hospitals in their area. This enables them to choose only those providers that offer the best health care quality at the most reasonable cost. Working together as business coalitions also helps to control administrative costs since fewer players means less red tape and less red tape means lower administrative costs.

> "... with the proper incentives, market forces alone can contain medical care outlays, just as they determine what is spent on cars, food, and housing. The risks in putting bureaucratic constraints on an industry bigger than automotive, aerospace, and computer manufacturing combined are enormous ..."
>
> — **"Yes, the Market Can Curb Health Costs"**
> *Fortune*, **December 28, 1992**

As American businesses and the American public join together to exercise their considerable clout as health care purchasers, they will begin to see a natural slowing of the nation's rising health care costs and a significant reduction of inappropriate and inefficient care — without jeopardizing the quality and choice of health care. That's managed competition. And it's health care reform that really works. We know. It's already working for us."

— SEAN SULLIVAN
President, National Business Coalition Forum on Health

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"The United States has undergone a dramatic change in its population. A significant factor in the nation's new demographics has been the growth of Hispanic communities. Today there are over 22 million Hispanics residing in the United States, accounting for nine percent of the nation's population. At the same time, Hispanics are the population group least likely to have access to a regular source of health care, and more than one-third (34.9%) of Hispanics are uninsured.

Given these data, it is clear that before any health reform plan can represent a national consensus, it must adequately reflect the needs and priorities of the many diverse communities that are the American people. A nationally imposed uniform health care system, with a single global budget, cannot be responsive to these diverse needs; that is why we support a managed competition approach to health care reform.

The health care priorities of Hispanic communities are simple to state: access for all to preventive health services, an ability to make decisions about health care, and access to culturally competent providers and care. Meeting these needs requires that we define and build a system through managed competition based on a strong new relationship between patient and provider. To begin an agenda for health reform with global budgeting is premature. It does not address the central need for improved systems of health care delivery.

> "The new Administration should look to the states for guidance rather than trying to impose its will...through a national health board that would regulate the cost of everything from tongue depressors to bypass surgery. Unless we reform the system now, before it reaches chaos or collapse, we will end up with government-run medicine, exorbitantly expensive and insensitive to patient needs ..."
>
> — **C. EVERETT KOOP M.D.**
> **former Surgeon General of the United States**
> **"Let's Reform Health Care Before It's Too Late"**
> *The New York Times*, **November 30, 1992**

More important, at its core global budgeting does not value what Hispanic communities hold most precious — a respect for individual and family decision making that is central to managed competition proposals. A system of global budgeting where decisions about access to services are made by boards removed from the priorities of families and communities will inevitably respond to other pressures. Global budgeting disempowers the Hispanic family by taking away their authority and role in health care decision making. A health reform plan that truly reflects the needs and concerns of all Americans must choose to empower the health care consumer with the ability to make health care choices for themselves and their families.

As the nation's action forum for Hispanic health, the National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations (COSSMHO) is committed to ensuring that a strong Hispanic voice is heard in the nation's health reform debate. Our membership is made up of community-based organizations and health professionals in every major Hispanic community throughout the United States. You can expect to hear from us in the nation's capital, your state capital and in all our nation's Hispanic communities."

— JANE L. DELGADO, PH.D., President & CEO
National Coalition of Hispanic Health & Human Services Organizations (COSSMHO)

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ists have been brought in to help prepare appointees for their hearings. Not all of them, according to a story in *The Wall Street Journal*, have been required to sign the six-month pledge.

If Clinton has set a new tone, it isn't that lobbyists are headed for the Smithsonian, but rather that they should do what they do a bit more quietly. For Tommy Boggs to pose for a *National Journal* cover story that said he was "Ready to Cash in on Clinton" was undoubtedly a misjudgment, if not so serious a one as Michael Deaver's appearance on the cover of *Time* talking on his limousine car phone, under the headline, "Who's This Man Calling?" Since Boggs's gaffe, lobbyists have been careful to praise the new rules and decry past lapses. According to Peter Kelly, "It's not the medium of lobbying that is wrong—it's the excesses. The excesses are when, because of relationships between individual lobbyists and legislators, things are not done on the merits." Of course, this is a good description of how Kelly's partner Paul Manafort earned $326,000 finagling HUD contracts for a New Jersey client.

Other lobbyists emit the same kind of double-talk. Beckel says he thinks the new rules "are just great. In fact, I think they're not tough enough. I think all this moaning is a bit much." What moaning? The American League of Lobbyists favors the proposals. Or take Mankiewicz, who says of Manatt's advertising of his connection to Kantor: "I thought some of it was a little bold," and quotes his colleague Paster as saying that under the new regime, lobbying is going to be about "what you know, not who you know." Hill & Knowlton, he says, is "now looking for experts rather than schmoozers—someone who can go to a committee and argue the fine points of health care, rather than saying, Let's play golf." If there's anything Frank Mankiewicz, schmoozer par excellence, will never do, it's argue the fine points of health care.

Or listen to Bob Strauss on Clark Clifford, as quoted by Marie Brenner in *The New Yorker*: "I worry about being tempted in the same way my old friend Clark Clifford became tempted. And I am not saying Clark did it for money, although he was always greedy as hell." Ponder for a moment the irony of Strauss, who earned $8 million for a single ethics-defying phone call, in which he represented both sides in the takeover of MCA by Matsushita, calling a fellow lobbyist greedy. Strauss recently abandoned his government job in Moscow to rejoin his old firm and sell connections to the new administration in Washington. But that appears to be the new drill: distance yourself from the excesses of the past, while committing the excesses of the present. •

The religious roots of Clintonism.

THE GREAT AWAKENING

By John B. Judis

"I hope nobody in this great hall tonight, or in our beloved country, has to go through tomorrow without a vision."
—Bill Clinton, July 1992

As Bill Clinton assumes office, he is understandably focusing his energy on reviving the American economy. But he confronts an equally difficult task of restoring Americans' faith in their future. That can be done partly by bringing unemployment down and improving our balance of trade, but the nation's spiritual doldrums have a certain life of their own. They stem from expectations about America's future that no administration may be able to meet—expectations that have deep roots in our religious past.

Since the first English settlers landed in the seventeenth century, Americans' understanding of politics has been shaped by their own peculiar vision of the millennium. Well into the eighteenth century, this vision was explicitly religious, derived from an American Protestant gloss on Revelation. Americans saw themselves as a "chosen people" destined to create what Cotton Mather called a "new-English Israel" that would counter the baleful influence of the Papal Antichrist and be the site of the thousand-year reign of Christ and his saints.

Around the time of the American Revolution, this vision began to be sublimated into a secular politics that historian Nathan Hatch has called "civil millennialism." But although it lost its explicit biblical content, it retained its underlying religious vision of Americans having a special role in founding a new earthly kingdom of God. The same vision was echoed in Thomas Jefferson's vision of an American Arcadia, Abraham Lincoln's conception of America as "the last best hope of Earth," Woodrow Wilson's understanding of America's mission as "the liberation and salvation of the

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world" and *Time* founder Henry Luce's idea of an American Century.

This millennial vision has had to be periodically renewed, causing American history to oscillate between periods of intense doubt and uncertainty—caused by a mismatch between vision and reality—and periods of clarity and resolution of purpose. Today we are in the third decade of a political and religious crisis that began in the 1960s. During this time the dominant vision of the cold war and the American Century—of America as the leader of a free-world struggle against communism—has faded without anything emerging to replace it. The void has been filled by apocalyptical movements on the left and the right; it has given rise to rapid mood swings within the electorate, epitomized in George Bush's fall from adulation to contempt within a year; and it has prompted the search for what is explicitly called a new vision. Indeed, no term was as much bandied about during the last election. Clinton's challenge as president will be not merely pragmatic but evangelical—to articulate a new understanding of America's millennial hopes. It will not be easy. America has undergone spiritual-political crises before, but it has never endured one quite like this.

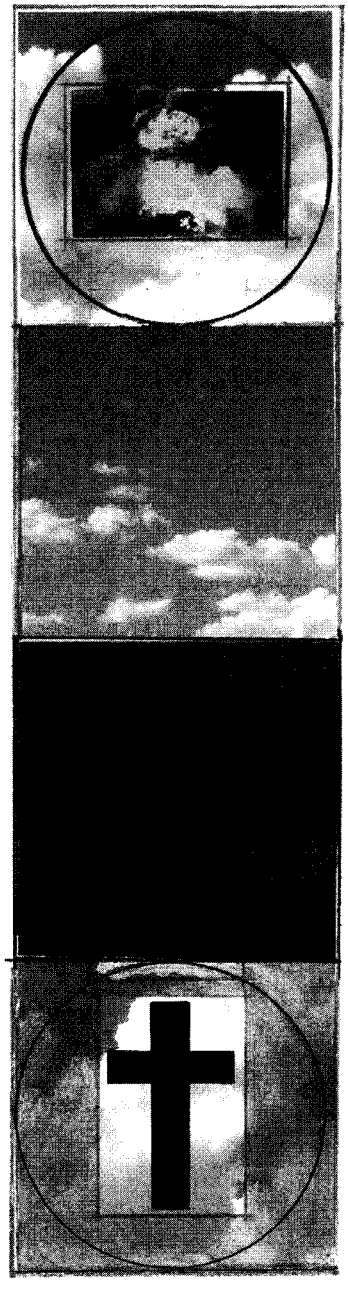

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Earlier crises, which began in the 1740s, 1830s and 1880s, were precipitated by the nation's expansion as a political, industrial and military power. In the seventeenth century American colonists saw themselves as establishing religious communities that the rest of the world would emulate. New England, John Winthrop told the émigrés aboard the *Arbella* in 1630, was to become "a City upon a Hill," or in Harvard President Urian Oakes's words, "the little model of the Kingdom of Christ on Earth." The colonists aspired to spiritual rather than economic or military power. But by the late nineteenth century, having laid claim to the continent, Theodore Roosevelt, Albert Beveridge, Brooks Adams and other leading Americans began to envisage America as what Adams called "the seat of empire." "God has," Beveridge said, "marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the redemption of the world."

For the first decades of the twentieth century, proponents of these rival visions of American power clashed over annexation of the Philippines and American entry into World Wars I and II. The debate between the two visions was finally resolved on the eve of World War II. As Luce argued in a famous *Life* essay, America could only hope to serve as a moral beacon if it was willing to assume world military and economic leadership. Luce wrote, "It now becomes our time to be the powerhouse from which the ideas spread throughout the world and do their mysterious work of lifting the life of mankind from the level of beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels." After World War II this expansive understanding of America's mission was transposed to the cold war against the Soviet Union, which was itself a struggle between two millennial faiths.

Americans' vision of personal salvation has undergone a similar transformation. The Puritans did not aspire to social equality or great wealth. "God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence hath so disposed of the Condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity; others mean and in subjection," Winthrop told the voyagers on the *Arbella*. But as Americans carved a viable economy out of the wilderness, they developed a far more enlarged view of their social objectives. They transferred the Protestant concept of equality before God to social and economic life.

In the decades before the Civil War, Protestant revivalists led the crusade for the abolition of slavery. In the last decades of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth century, Protestant ministers supplemented the quest for individual redemption with the pursuit of social salvation. The ministers of the Social Gospel sought to create what Washington Gladden called "right relations among men" by abolishing poverty and class exploitation. Many of the twentieth century's most prominent progressives and liberals—Henry Wallace, Hubert Humphrey, George McGovern and Martin Luther King Jr., to name only a few—were students of this Social Gospel; others absorbed its lessons through secular equivalents.

America's millennial vision after World War II was a blend of the American Century, the cold war and the Social Gospel. It expressed Americans' conviction that we were engaged in a struggle to transform the world according to our own image of democracy and social equality. This vision dominated American politics during the 1950s and reached its apogee in the Kennedy years. It was succeeded by another crisis of belief. In its initial stages, this crisis followed the same trajectory as earlier awakenings in the 1830s and 1880s—from apocalyptic and reactionary movements to utopian and pro-

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gressive revivals. But unlike past turns of the wheel, these utopian movements provided the basis not for a new vision, but for further self-destructive circles of dark despair and blind hope.

The crisis was initially set off by two disparate events: the emergence in the 1950s of a postindustrial American capitalism based on expanding consumption and a new realm of personal freedom, and the attempt to extend the Social Gospel to black Americans. Alarm at these changes set off both a revival among Fundamentalists and Pentecostals and a new conservative movement. But by the early 1960s this reaction was superseded by the development of left-wing utopianism that hoped to expand still further the definition of American millennialism.

For the new left of the 1960s, everything seemed possible: Keynesianism would banish unemployment and poverty; technology would drastically reduce the work week, making possible both participatory democracy and sexual liberation; the Church, courts and science would banish all forms of prejudice; therapy would transform personal life and remove invidious distinctions between men and women; and capitalism and communism would converge in a democratic socialism.

If the previous pattern of awakenings, described in William McLoughlin's classic *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform*, had held, then the utopian dreams of the '60s would have cohered into a "new world view." McLoughlin and Robert Bellah predicted that "some form of Judeo-Christian socialism" would eventually emerge in the '80s. But the dreams of the '60s were eclipsed by a new period of pessimism and reaction. The cause lay in a succession of unprecedented events.

Americans' quest for a new millennial vision had always been carried forward by the nation's triumphs, but from 1965 to 1980, the Vietnam War, ghetto riots, the first trade deficit in the century, the abandonment of the gold standard, the OPEC energy boycott, American defeat in Southeast Asia and stagflation destroyed the basis for a new vision. These events threw into question Americans' commitment to the Social Gospel and shattered their hopes for an American Century without leading to a new millennial vision. For the first time, Americans were faced with the prospect of lowering rather than raising their expectations.

This experience of adversity inspired apocalyptic movements on both the left and the right. Movements on the left abandoned the Social Gospel for a cult of redemption through violence, while movements on the right sought to recover the lost world of pre-New Deal, prefeminist small-town America. Both the Weathermen and Black Panthers and the Pentecostals and Fundamentalists saw America as doomed. The best-selling nonfiction book of the 1970s was Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which prophesied that the world would be destroyed before the Second Coming of Christ and the millennium.

Americans, who had experienced a renewed faith in government in the beginning of the '60s, became deeply cynical. At the same time, they continued to long for a new millennial vision that would lift them and the country out of their torpor. Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger and Jimmy Carter tried to get Americans to come to terms with the reality of decline and to develop more modest expectations for America's future, but their efforts were rebuked.

Carter's attempt was the most explicit. In July 1979 he told Americans they suffered from a "spiritual crisis" and from a "crisis of confidence ... that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will.... The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and the political fabric of America." Carter warned Americans that "there are no short-term solutions to our long-range problems. There is simply no way to avoid sacrifice."

Instead of applauding Carter for his candor, Americans blamed him for the country's decline. Ronald Reagan made Carter's address—which he termed the "malaise" speech even though Carter never used the word—the centerpiece of his successful presidential campaign. Reagan ran on the premise that the American Century was still alive. "They say that the United States has had its day in the sun, that our nation has passed its zenith," Reagan explained in his acceptance speech in July 1980. "My fellow citizens, I utterly reject that view."

Reagan's victories in 1980 and 1984 represented an Indian summer of the American Century and the cold war. Reagan replicated the logic of American millennialism, promising Americans a "breathtaking future" but warning against the threat of the "evil empire." He began and ended speeches with the tag lines of American millennialism—from Winthrop's "city upon a hill" to Paine's "begin the world again" to Franklin Roosevelt's "rendezvous with destiny."

Reagan also represented a return to the utopianism of the early '60s. Although his formal pedigree was conservative, and though he appealed to reactionary sentiments about race and family, he nevertheless summoned up millennial hopes for universal peace and prosperity. Like the Keynesians of the early '60s, the Reaganites of the early '80s preached that America would banish unemployment and poverty. Reagan promised to end the threat of Armageddon through creating an anti-nuclear "umbrella" in the skies.

Reagan's utopianism was destroyed partly by the sheer implausibility of his claims for the economy. Although his supply-side remedies inspired a temporary boom, they failed to halt the decline in Americans' standard of living and share of world markets. Ironically, Reagan's vision was also undermined by his willingness to come to terms with the "evil empire" he had railed against. The cold war's end removed the last prop from the vision of the American Century. By the time Reagan left office, Americans had begun to turn back again toward uncertainty and fear of the future.

George Bush attempted to preserve the vision of the

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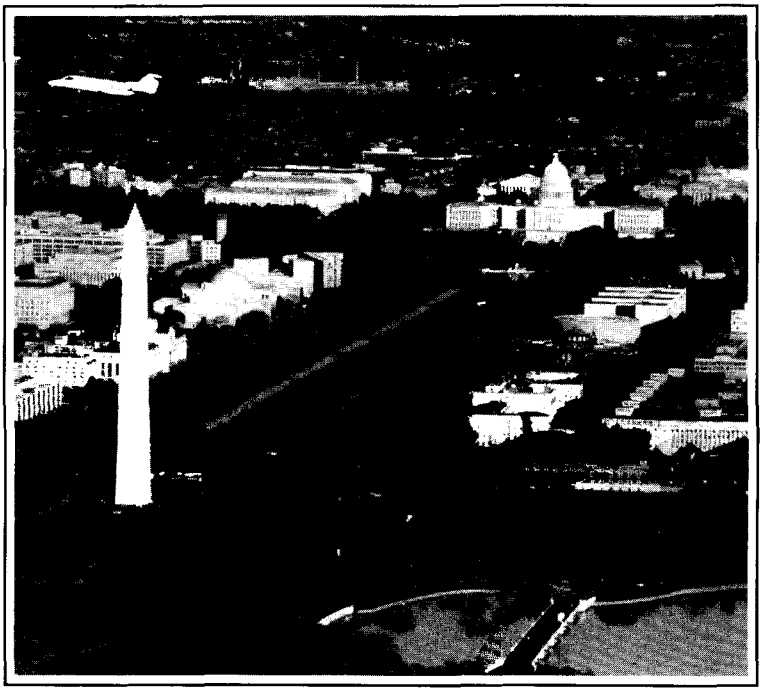

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American Century. In his 1988 presidential campaign, he accused Michael Dukakis of believing that "the American Century has ... drawn to a close." "We're on the optimistic side; we're on the American side," Bush intoned. During and after the war against Saddam Hussein, Bush repeatedly cited the promise of a "next American Century." "If anyone tells you America's best days are behind her, they are looking the wrong way," Bush announced in his January 16, 1991, State of the Union address.

At a Republican dinner in November 1991, Bush declared that he was going to ask voters "who[m] they trust to make sure that the twenty-first century will be the next American century. And I'll tell you confidently what their answer's going to be. It's going to be us. It's going to be the Republicans." But as the recession continued, and as memories of Operation Desert Storm dimmed, Bush's promise of a next American century rang hollow. It was rarely followed up in his speeches, and was undercut by Bush's instinctive realism in foreign affairs and inaction domestically.

It was this opening that arguably gave Clinton his electoral victory. Clinton ran the same race against Bush that Reagan had run against Carter, blaming him not only for the nation's decline, but also for lacking a "national vision" with which to lead Americans out of it. In his acceptance speech at Madison Square Garden, Clinton said:

> Of all the things George Bush has ever said that I disagree with, perhaps the thing that bothers me most is how he derides and degrades the American tradition of seeing, and seeking a better future. He mocks it as "the vision thing."

And Bush's fate was very similar to Carter's. He was by no means an inept president. He showed considerable skill at foreign policy, and his economic record was partly the result of his having assumed the presidency at the end of a business cycle. But like Carter he was singularly unable to quiet Americans' doubts about their future. In the end, the voters blamed Bush both for the nation's economic decline and for its lack of a new vision.

During the 1992 election, two visions for America emerged—from Bush's challengers Pat Buchanan and Clinton. In contrast to Bush, they both acknowledged the end of the American Century and offered more modest visions of America's future. Both men—as well as Ross Perot and the other Democratic challengers—argued that the United States could no longer afford to be a "city upon a hill" and the "seat of empire." "What doth it profit a nation if it gain the whole world, and lose its own soul?" Buchanan wrote in *The Washington Post*. Clinton expressed the same thought somewhat more equivocally. "Now that we have changed the world, it's time to change America," he said in his acceptance speech.

Both men promised a future replete with jobs, but there was a wide divergence between the kinds of hilltops they wanted to create. Buchanan, the religious right and the paleoconservatives were throwbacks to the reactionaries of the 1950s: they stood for a return to America without drug dealers and prostitutes, but also without black lawyers, women doctors, lesbian comedians and Spanish-speaking immigrants. By contrast, Clinton and Vice President Al Gore were cramped, earnest descendants of the left-wing utopians of the early '60s. Clinton's social vision of a "new covenant" was inclusive rather than exclusive. "We need each other—all of us," he declared. He sought to come to terms with the social consequences of postindustrial society—from single mothers to gays in the military. In his pledge to achieve prosperity and equality, he echoed the promise of the Social Gospel.

Clearly, Americans in 1992 preferred Clinton's more positive vision both to Buchanan's narrow reaction and to Bush's hollow and uncharacteristic evocation of the American Century. Clinton's victory represented another turn toward liberal utopianism in the most recent cycle of despair and faith that began in the 1960s. But if the nation continues to suffer decline, and if Clinton is not able to articulate a new vision that buoys Americans' millennial hopes, many Americans could once again turn back toward a politics of reaction and apocalypse.

As president, Clinton must find a way to halt America's economic decline. *Wall Street Journal* editorialists and other frustrated Reaganites can seek to explain away budget and trade deficits, but it is hard to reassure American factory workers whose standard of living today is lower than it was in 1964. Clinton must also stem the chronic deterioration of our inner cities, symbolized by the L.A. riots last year. In trying to do these things, however, Clinton faces obstacles that may well be beyond the reach of government and politics: Wall Street's penchant for speculation rather than investment, the adversarial and self-defeating relations between management and labor and, not least, the inexorable trend of American capitalism away from the kinds of manufacturing jobs that sustained cities like Los Angeles and Detroit. Clinton can do a perfectly good job reducing the budget deficit and curbing health care costs and still fail to change the fact or perception of decline.

Clinton must also convince Americans to accept that the nation will not soon, and perhaps will never again, enjoy the kind of absolute supremacy that it had in the decades after World War II. To his credit, he offered a constricted view of America's millennial future. During his transition period, Clinton also moved away from the campaign's promise of instant revitalization. But the voters in November 1992 did not really endorse Clinton's view as much as they rejected Bush's. It remains to be seen whether Americans, who have experienced 300 years of steady rise as a world economic and military power, can gracefully accept a lesser role for themselves and their children in the world's destiny. The American voter rudely rejected other politicians and statesmen who counseled lowered expectations. Will Clinton be able to escape their fate? •

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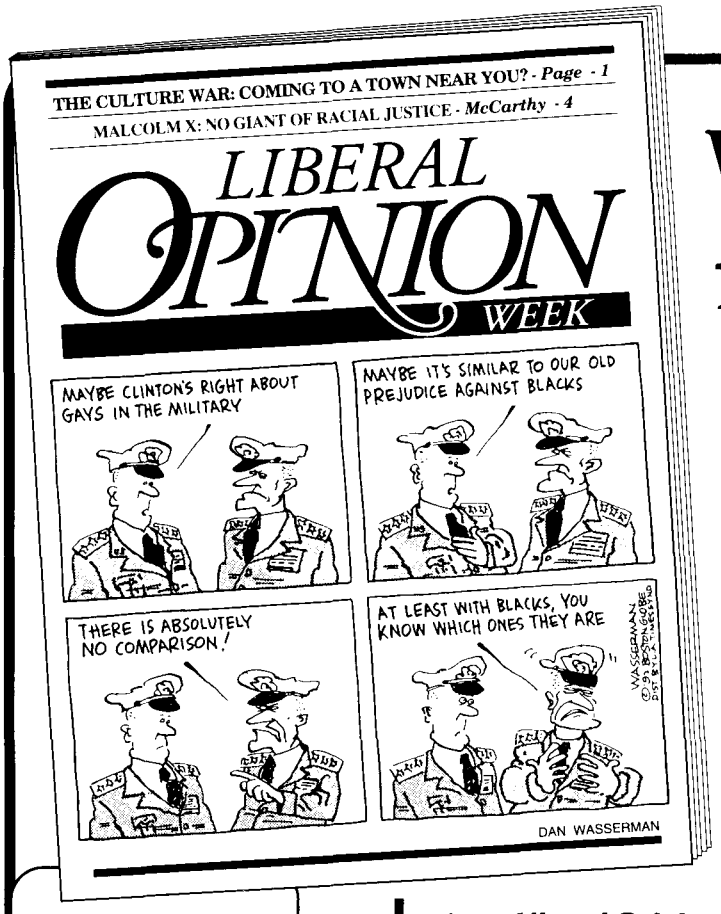
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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Basic Ingredient

The course of Western drama is underpinned, a good deal of the time, by the matter of money. Wealth is essential to the action of many, many plays throughout history. This is obvious in high comedy and farce: schools for scandal, afternoon assignations by errant husbands and wives at the same hotel, are not the games of the financially hard-pressed. But money as a factor of freedom is primary in much serious drama, too, especially romantic drama. The houses of Montague and Capulet were not, could not have been, shopkeepers and plumbers.

Such were the thoughts in my head that helped to pass the time during **Damage** (New Line). The story is about a sexual obsession shared by a man and a woman, so fierce that it wrecks loyalties and reason. Obviously such obsessions are not allotted by the IRS only to those with high six-figure incomes; tomorrow's newspaper will bring bloody news to the contrary. But to examine the subject almost in the abstract, to avoid the subway via limousines, to facilitate impulsive trips to Paris just to consummate a quickie in a doorway, money is needed. In order for the world to be well lost for love, the world must first be possessed.

Damage has all the accoutrements but not much more. Josephine Hart's novel, unread by me, was adapted for the screen by David Hare, the once-extraordinary English playwright whose powers are in (I hope temporary) decline. Hart's idea was an inversion of the Hippolytus myth—an affair between a man and his son's girlfriend. This is potentially the stuff of agony, but the film is so crammed with assumptions of our sympathy, with protracted eye-locked stares, with disregard for minimal credibility, and the sexual encounters between the middle-aged man and the young woman are treated so consistently as events in Olympic free-style wrestling, that all the simulated heat leaves us cold. Worse, risibility lurks just off camera, and is sometimes glimpsed.

Character is obliterated. The man is a British government minister of fame and power, of brain and responsibility. Yet he never utters a word of reluctance about his involvement when the affair starts, and he makes only a weak effort to break it off when the girlfriend becomes his son's fiancée. The young woman, even though she has a shadowed past (her brother committed suicide out of incestuous passion for her), plunges unrestrainedly into yet another mess—is in fact the one who insists that the affair continue. If the whole had been treated as a drama of the way that obsession can dull the moral sense, some drama might have been made; but these people don't seem Dionysically maddened. He is stupid, she monstrous.

This supposedly deep, primal drama is capped with two cheap melodramatic tricks, a discovery and an accident. These last matters involve an extra apartment that would not have been available to poorer folk. The very last sequence, in which we see the man living a lone life in a continental village, is the kind of penance that requires an independent income.

Jeremy Irons plays the minister with all the Englishness at his disposal, which is quite a lot and which contrasts neatly with the boudoir hurly-burly. But isn't he getting tired of nudity and nibbling? He's done it fairly often in films. Isn't he after all (before all?) an actor? Mad passion is certainly within an actor's province, but there's a point, which Irons reaches too frequently in his career, where calisthenic coupling takes over from acting, where talent is abandoned for abandonment. On your feet for a while, Irons.

Juliette Binoche, the young woman, tries hard to freight her stares with significance. Rupert Graves is negligible as her boyfriend, Irons's son. Miranda Richardson, lately of *Enchanted April* and *The Crying Game*, does well in the stock role of the quietly witty, quietly perceptive English wife and mother—and has one heartbreaking moment.

Louis Malle, the director, though he has often been a bit of a fool, both in his choice of subjects and in his flubbing of them, has some cinematic sense. Parts of *Damage* are acutely *seen*, but it simply isn't worth looking at. Another director might have known that in advance. Malle, as before in his career, was so eager to be simultaneously serious and shocking that he was blind to the vacuity of the script.

Much has been written about wo-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hoffa. *Jack Nicholson's sheer acting brawn is tremendous. Danny DeVito directs—and acts—impressively. A disturbingly American work. (Reviewed 1/18/93)* **Intervista.** *That beguiling old conjurer, Federico Fellini, makes a wistful enchantment out of a visit to his studio by Japanese interviewers. (12/7/92)* **Malcolm X.** *Enough of his life to explain, vividly, his reputation. Spike Lee directs and Denzel Washington acts with recurrent, though not constant, fire. (12/21/92)* **The Muppet Christmas Carol.** *You need to be a Muppet and a Michael Caine enthusiast to relish this version of Dickens. But that's hardly an exclusive club. (1/4&11/93)* **—SK**

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men's clothes and costumes in film, less about men's. Perhaps a sartorial history of males in film could be developed. For starters: James Mason's tweed jackets in *The Shooting Party*, Tom Cruise's homespun shirts in *Far and Away*, Jeremy Irons's Savile Row suits in *Damage*.

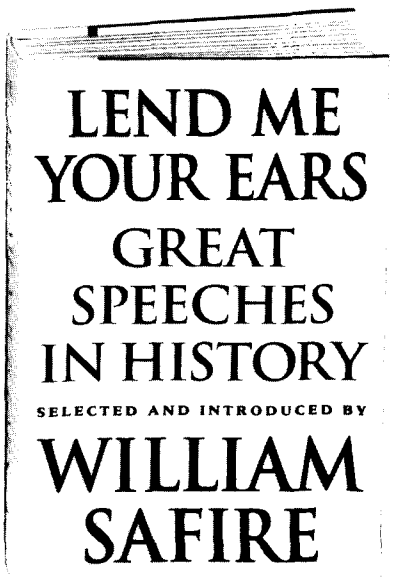
Money is also tacitly potent in Kenneth Branagh's new film **Peter's Friends** (Samuel Goldwyn). It takes place in an immense English Stately Home. The form is a venerable one: what happens with and among a group of guests (New Year's here, instead of the usual weekend)—and those guests are all well, or at least adequately, heeled. The house-guest form has been used with less well-off people, but in those cases it always seems to be slumming. Luxe becomes it.

During this gathering of friends for a few days at the turn of the year, we know that there will be revelations, confrontations, reconciliations, etc. There are. The screenplay by Martin Bergman and Rita Rudner, who acts in it, scurries in pursuit of bright dialogue like a whippet after a rabbit and sometimes pounces. (Commenting on a friend's dire misfortune, one man says, "If there *is* a God, he takes long lunches.") But when a screenplay snuggles into such a worn form as this one, it needs more than the occasional zinger: it needs justification in theme or sheer pleasure in the characters' company. Or both. *Peter's Friends* has neither.

Branagh, as director, apparently likes old movies. *Dead Again* was a Joan Crawford *misterioso* weepie that gave him and his wife, the glorious Emma Thompson, chances for virtuosity. Presumably he chose this script because it gave him and Thompson chances for whimsical ordinariness. He plays an English T.V. hack writer married to an American T.V.-soap star (played by Rudner, the screenwriter) and is whimsically ordinary. Thompson plays a book editor gawkily questing after sex, and she manages to be simultaneously plain and charming. Stephen Fry strives graciously for equilibrium as the host. All the others would be better in a better script.

When I was myself a book editor, the most irritating kind of manuscript to read was the one that was not good enough to publish yet not bad enough to throw aside after a few pages or chapters: I had to invest the time in finishing it even though it was insufficiently above the ruck. Thus *Peter's Friends*. Branagh and Thompson should have sent the manuscript back with a note saying, "Please let us see your next." •

President Clinton, do your speechwriters have this book?



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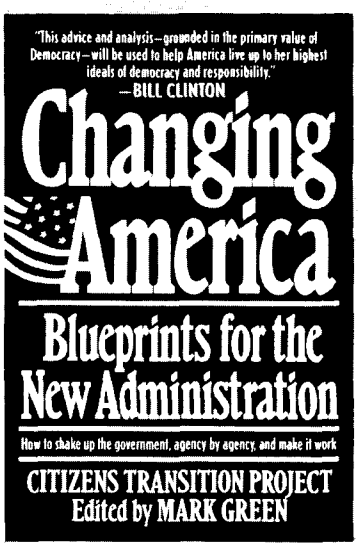
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Robert Brustein on Theater

Stella for Star

A splendid woman of the theater, Stella Adler, died in the final days of 1992. The *Times* obituary put her age at 91. She was probably somewhat older—at the least, her life spanned the whole century. Stella's mother, Sara, also died at a very advanced age, after a distinguished career in the Yiddish theater at the side of her father, the famous Yiddish tragedian Jacob Adler. Stella once revealed how she knew her mother was approaching death. The woman was accustomed to holding a tea cup with her pinkie cocked, and one day—the day she died—Stella noticed her little finger droop. What small sign—what slight interruption of her customary seductiveness and grace—announced the death of Stella Adler?

In her last three decades, Stella was known primarily as an inspiring acting teacher running studios in New York and Los Angeles, but she was, like all her clan, essentially an actor. Beginning her career as a 4-year-old on the Yiddish stage, she abandoned the theater permanently in 1961 after being critically pummeled in a London production of Arthur Kopit's *Oh Dad, Poor Dad.* But her every act, her every gesture, her every class was a performance. Stella's low, commanding voice, which could also tinkle with coquetry, was an instrument ideally equipped to make ideas and emotions theatrical.

I don't mean that Stella was "actressy." Naturally endowed with regal dignity, she hated fakery in life as well as on the stage. But if she was larger than life, that was because she knew that life was larger than life. Though she occasionally held her gowns together with safety pins and was known to paste on an eyelash backward, she dressed like an elegant courtesan and lived like one. Her roomy Fifth Avenue apartment, where she entertained so many notables, was furnished like a Venetian bordello, with low-hanging chandeliers, burnished mirrors and overstuffed furniture. And she was always happiest holding court with artists and intellectuals over a groaning table.

She equated style with size, which may be why she so despised the kind of "truth" and "reality" associated with the Method. Her quarrel with Lee Strasberg, centering on his obsession with "affective memory" exercises, was really over the way Method actors reduced everything to the level of their own meager lives. How could anyone hope to find the raging majesty of Lear in the limited experience of working-class stiffs or middle-class householders?

Stella admired plays with large ambitions because she loved a large imagination (she also loved large floppy hats). Though her formal schooling was thin, she was an omnivorous reader. Her celebrated script analysis course displayed a familiarity with dramatic literature well beyond the domestic play syllabus of most scene study classes; her understanding of text often exceeded that of most scholars. She was famously tough on female students, some of whom she bullied and cowed into near paralysis. (By contrast, she bewitched the men in her class, among them her most celebrated products, Robert De Niro, Warren Beatty and Marlon Brando.) This is not to say that women didn't adore her, but they usually felt intimidated by her powerful theatricalism. The fact that Stella had forsaken the stage as a result of wounds she never revealed—and the way she spoke about the cruelty of critics, the insensitivity of directors and the difficulty of acting—made some of them conclude that the profession was not worth the hardship.

But if Stella believed that acting was arduous, she also believed it to be profoundly honorable and worthy of respect. She allowed no gum-chewing, smoking, slouching or lateness in class. She was appalled by the sloppy dress and rude manners of her Yale students in the '60s. For her, the actor was a figure of the highest dignity, and anyone who didn't understand this had no place in the profession. After a performance of *Troilus and Cressida* at my theater, she wrote praising the performers for "giving us all they had—all their richness and spirit. And by the time they lined up to bow, I understood that there is no more noble man in the world than the actor."

Stella's rhetoric was often Shakespearean, but what a contrast with the usual view of actors as either unemployed wastrels or meat-market celebrities. She had grown up in a rich Yiddish acting tradition, where, when the noted tragedian Boris Thomashefsky died, people lined up on Second Avenue from Fourteenth Street to Houston Street to view the corpse on stage. She was familiar, too, with the Russian theater, where actors shared state honors with statesmen and scientists. And as one of the founding members in 1931 of the Group Theater, arguably the most electric acting company in American history, she absorbed its passionate idealism, though not without a characteristic dose of skepticism.

Like most Group Theater actors, Stella spent time in Hollywood, playing the "other woman" in a few inferior films in the late '30s. She temporarily changed her name and permanently bobbed her nose, and perhaps she might have stayed there if her career had prospered. But I doubt it. Her first allegiance was to the theater. It was in the theater that she formed her strongest relationships, particularly with her second husband, Harold Clurman, the Group's most visionary figure. By his own account (in *The Fervent Years*), Clurman "rushed" this "spiritually vibrant" woman into marriage, and their tumultuous union had the internal strains of any relationship that mixes love with work. One famous point of conflict came when Clurman forced Stella, then in her 30s, to play Bessie Berger (the mother in Odets's *Awake and Sing*) instead of her daughter, Hennie. She was a triumph, but after Clurman cast her in another mature role in *Paradise Lost*, there were more flare-ups.

Stella's reluctance to play a series of character parts was not just a matter of vanity. She truly believed that actresses were spiritually affected by their roles and that Clurman was aging her prematurely. For the same reason, years later, she rebuked me for casting my wife in the wordless part of the Mummy in Strindberg's *Ghost Sonata.* Norma was required to wear pasty old-age makeup and a costume that appeared to be disintegrating on her body, besides being instructed to play the role as if she were looking into her grave. Didn't I know, Stella asked, how this could affect the psychic poise of a sensitive woman?

Stella's contributions to the Group Theater were crucial not only as an actress, but also as a director and an educator. It was she who, after journeying to Paris to inform Stanislavsky that his theories were ruining her love of acting, discovered that Strasberg had all the while been misinterpreting the Stanislavsky system. (Her belief is confirmed in Richard Hornby's recent book, *The End of Acting.*) Stella's partly personal schism with Strasberg grew wider. She quarreled with other Group members, including her brother Luther, their arguments some-

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times spilling into curtain calls. And she did not endear herself to her more indigent colleagues by flaunting what Clurman called a "taste for the first-class," including European travels and her apartment on Fifth Avenue. (One story, perhaps apocryphal, has it that she joined a protest march wearing a mink coat and carrying a poodle.) Ultimately her temperamental clashes with Clurman dissolved the marriage, despite their artistic affinities, just as internal quarrels and an indifferent culture dissolved the Group, for all its radical idealism.

It was then that Stella first found professional satisfaction in teaching (she found romantic fulfillment in marriage to the novelist Mitchell Wilson). Later, in 1966, she accepted my invitation to head the acting department at Yale, where she captivated Kingman Brewster. (Upon being introduced, she asked him in her most imperiously charming manner, "And what does a Yale president do?") I saw this appointment as an opportunity to bring her back to the stage. Her friend and colleague Bobby Lewis had proposed a production of *The Sea Gull* with Stella in the role she was born to play, the grand actress Arkadina.

Secretly, Stella told me she would accept the part, but only if the Russian George Tovstonogov directed her. Tovstonogov had been doing experimental productions of Chekhov at the Gorki Theater in Leningrad, and Stella, criticized by some Yale students for being "old-fashioned," wanted her comeback to be audacious. Unfortunately at that time American-Soviet relations had deteriorated to a low point. Also the mails were very slow. (I sent Tovstonogov a letter in early October; he replied in late December.) When the Soviet authorities proved unwilling to let him out of the country, we dispatched a messenger to Canada, where the Soviet cultural minister, Madame Furtseva, was visiting Expo '67, to beg her permission for an exit visa. She brushed past our emissary brusquely. We collected supportive letters from Sol Hurok, Robert Kennedy and Lillian Hellman, and sent them to the Soviet Union. No response. Finally, and with great regret, we were forced to cancel the production.

Stella showed no great disappointment, and I have often wondered whether she knew in advance that she had created impossible conditions. Whatever the case, she continued to limit her performances to the classroom and the living room. These were wonderful, but Stella was not happy in the revolutionary Yale atmosphere of the '60s, especially when the "pishers," as she called the young student directors, claimed to know more about acting than she did. "It's the blind leading the blind," she said scornfully and went back to New York, lugging her carpetbag and putting on her big floppy hat.

After that, Stella connected her studio to the NYU acting program but spent more and more time in Los Angeles. She returned to Yale from time to time for productions, dinner parties and, finally, to see my wife play Arkadina in *The Sea Gull*. Norma, who had been her student and assistant before we met, was terrified about playing Stella's role, but her teacher's response was warm and generous. At the end, when Dr. Dorn enters to tell Trigorin that Treplev has shot himself, Stella put her hand to her mouth and shouted, "Oh my God!" as if she had never seen or read a word of her favorite play.

Stella Adler lived long enough to see all but Bobby Lewis and Elia Kazan, among the leading members of the Group Theater, die before her: Clurman, Strasberg, Morris Carnovsky, Phoebe Brand, Francis Farmer, John Garfield, Franchot Tone, her brother Luther—a cortege of great American talent. She was a witness to how ideals could tarnish and hope grow dim in the struggle to survive in the American theater, but she never lost her own commitment. She was of a generation that produced many grand ladies of the stage, including Helen Hayes, Katherine Corness, Eva Le Gallienne, Judish Anderson, Katherine Hepburn and others.

It is now a lost tradition, and Stella didn't belong to it long, if indeed she ever did. But she maintained an indelible place in the pantheon of Olympian theater people through the strength of her convictions, the integrity of her character, the brilliance of her mind. She and I approached the theater from somewhat different directions, but I always held her in the highest esteem. I also adored her, and not just as another of her smitten *cavalieri*. In her deepest being, Stella embodied the art of our profession, and what it could become. Her loss impoverishes us in more ways than I want to think about. •

A movie's shady connections and disconnections.

Tales of Hoffa

BY SEAN WILENTZ

Jimmy Hoffa was the most famous American labor leader of the late 1950s and 1960s. Until now, as his biographer Arthur A. Sloane notes, he has been remembered chiefly as a hoodlum, in a string of tasteless jokes. There are jokes about his disappearance and presumed murder by the mob in 1975, and jokes about his thuggish reputation and the violence of the union he commanded. (How many Teamsters does it take to screw in a light bulb? A hundred, at union scale. [Pause.] You got a problem with that?) There are also some books about Hoffa and the Teamsters for those who want to learn the whole sad story, but the chances are good that the bookshop stocks them under "Crime," not "Labor."

Danny DeVito's film *Hoffa* reworks the man's life into a mythic tragedy, into a story of a heroic, embattled champion of the working class who made, by force of circumstance, a Faustian pact with the underworld. The movie's reception has been generally admiring: strong notices, top-ten lists, a Golden Globe nomination for Jack Nicholson, its leading man. There has also been generous behind-the-scenes coverage about how the filmmaker and David Mamet, the screenwriter, resurrected the union leader and his rough-and-tumble world.

But *Hoffa* is not the dramatized biography that it purports to be. There are, in fact, three distinct stories that need to be told about the film: the story of *Hoffa* and how it was made, the story that *Hoffa* tells, and the story of Jimmy Hoffa. In each of these stories, people deal in elusive distinctions between fact and fantasy; and each of them shows legitimate business machinations getting caught up in heedless ambition and a disregard for the truth. Placed side by side, the stories indicate just how corrupt and fraudulent this exculpatory movie really is.

The first story, the story of *Hoffa*, mainly concerns the movie's troubled origins. Most critics, and certainly most moviegoers, must be unaware that *Hoffa* started out as a proposal made by some

SEAN WILENTZ is professor of history at Princeton University. His book *The Key of Liberty*, written with Michael Merrill, is due in March from Harvard University Press.

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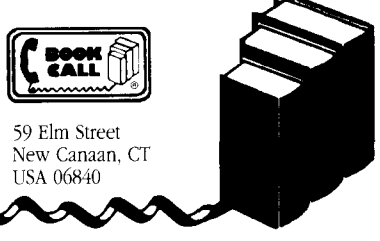

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former associates of the film's hero. As the *Hoffa* project developed, moreover, it remained indecently close to its roots. The original proposers of the idea included Frank Ragano, a former longtime Hoffa lawyer, and Brett O'Brien, the son of Charles "Chuckie" O'Brien, a Florida Teamster official who was well known in the union as Hoffa's own adoptive son.

Sometime in 1988 or 1989, these men approached a prominent California record promoter named Joseph Isgro, seeking support for a film on Jimmy Hoffa. The Hoffa family had reportedly been offended by a television miniseries about the ex-union leader that aired in 1983. The new movie, the proposers said, would be based on rights granted to them by the Hoffa estate and Chuckie O'Brien. Isgro snapped up the idea. Isgro was widely known as a powerful figure in his business, the leading independent record promoter in the country. He was also, as Fredric Dannen's *Hit Men* explains, deeply implicated in organized crime. In 1989 federal authorities indicted Isgro for alleged involvement in racketeering, payola and drug trafficking. (He stood trial on fifty-one federal counts in 1990, only to have the charges dismissed on a technicality; a federal appeals court recently reinstated the indictment, and a new trial is scheduled in February.)

Ragano and Brett O'Brien's pitch intrigued Isgro, and not merely because of the money to be made. "I really identified with Hoffa's plight," he later told a reporter. "He had a lot of run-ins with the law and I could relate to the kind of government pressure he was subjected to." And so Isgro signed an agreement to proceed with the movie. The deal soon fell apart, and Ragano later sued for breach of contract. (He recently received a six-figure judgment.) Isgro quickly reached a separate agreement for the rights to the story of Brett O'Brien's father, Chuckie.

Isgro was eager to make the most of his acquisition. The screenwriting job went to Robin Moore, who wrote *The French Connection*. Moore turned in a script based on Chuckie O'Brien's story, fleshed out with interviews of other Hoffa cronies. Isgro also got the Hollywood producer Edward R. Pressman deeply interested in the enterprise. Pressman, working through one of his production companies, arranged for the backing from Twentieth Century-Fox. In January 1990 Chuckie O'Brien publicly endorsed the project and called Isgro (who would become its executive producer) a "very honorable man." *Hoffa* was under way.

When dealing with men like Isgro and O'Brien, respected moviemakers like Pressman and Joseph Roth (the executive at Fox) might be expected to show some caution from the start, to raise a few questions. How reliable was a film about Hoffa that was coming from Isgro, whom one CBS record executive described as "a Grade-B movie character"? Who, exactly, was Chuckie O'Brien, and what were his motives (apart from a common desire to cash in)? Above all, could O'Brien really be trusted when it came to telling the story of Hoffa?

If Pressman and Roth lingered on the last of these questions, they discovered the absurdity of a Hoffa film based on the rights of Chuckie O'Brien. O'Brien had long struck many people around him as a loose cannon—"a pathological liar, a mooch and an opportunist," in the words of one of Hoffa's relatives. More importantly, at the time of Hoffa's disappearance in 1975, O'Brien had quickly fallen under suspicion for complicity in the crime. His relations with Hoffa had become strained; he had flaunted his ties to suspected anti-Hoffa mobsters; his own conflicting statements about the Hoffa case along with circumstantial evidence (although insufficient to indict him) convinced the FBI and many in the Hoffa family that he had a direct hand in the abduction. Some thought he took part willingly; others thought he acted as a tool of his mobster friends. Either way, he was a disgrace.

At the time, O'Brien insisted he was not at the scene of the crime and thereafter professed loyalty to Hoffa. At the very least, though, he was an unreliable source, especially about the events surrounding Hoffa's disappearance. More generally, he had every reason now to play the loyalist, whitewash Hoffa's story and clear himself of any lingering suspicion. Nevertheless, Pressman and Roth signed on with Isgro and reached for their Rolodexes. Dismayed that Moore's script was not "finished material," the producers called David Mamet, the elegiast of tough-guy profanity. Mamet took the assignment and got right to work. Roth later claimed that the studio (at Mamet's insistence) had minimal input. The producers sent Mamet "all the research," and Mamet sent back a screenplay that the producers agreed was excellent. Only Mamet knows for certain how much O'Brien's story shaped his writing. Some scenes depart significantly from O'Brien's public statements; others, highlighting little-known O'Brien lore, do not. But there was nothing in Mamet's script to compromise O'Brien's honor as a loyal Hoffa supporter. Indeed (as we will see) there

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are hints that *Hoffa*'s script includes a cloaked apology for Chuckie.

From this point on, the story of *Hoffa* follows a more conventional Hollywood path. The director, Danny DeVito, worked in a few changes on Mamet's script ("I got David to finish his sentences"), landed Jack Nicholson for the leading role and plotted an epic. After twelve hard weeks of shooting in four different cities, the film was ready for final editing and a showy Christmas 1992 release. The promotion was set at $10 million. For good measure, the moviemakers arranged with Harper-Collins publishers for a paperback "novelization" of Mamet's screenplay, which showed up in stores in the weeks before the movie opened.

What, then, of the second story, the story that *Hoffa* tells? It is merely the latest example of Hollywood's insistence on rendering history as biography. And in recounting Hoffa's biography, Mamet and DeVito make lavish use of the "faction" technique; that is, the acknowledged blending of fact and fiction. Unlike more scrupulous fictional movies (Sylvester Stallone's *F.I.S.T.*, for example, an earlier gloss on Hoffa's story), the "faction" films claim the authority of history, sometimes going to great lengths to re-create certain physical details. (In this respect, at least, Nicholson's appearance is almost perfect, from his haircut down to his white socks and dark shoes.) And yet, because they admit to being partial inventions, these films evade charges of distortion and falsification, and are immune to any legal consequences that might follow. The moviemakers can have it both ways. Their audiences can never be sure, however, where history ends and fiction begins.

The upshot of the fictions in *Hoffa*, beyond the particular alterations of Hoffa's story, is a validation of Mamet's familiar myth of America, one baby boomer's fanciful world of our fathers. Mamet's product has long been an imaginary and highly romanticized world of tough guys, the last *real* American men. Socially, it is a world of seedy respectability. Historically, it seems to have peaked sometime between the end of the 1940s and the middle of the 1960s. Within this world, men rub up against certain supposedly eternal American verities: that morality is phony; that everyone is on the take; that anyone who won't admit as much is either an idiot, a liar or a weakling (in Mamet's dialogue, a "cunt" or a "fag"). Surrounded by these hard realities, the tough guys confront their own twilight.

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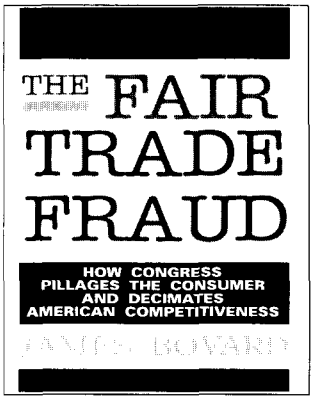

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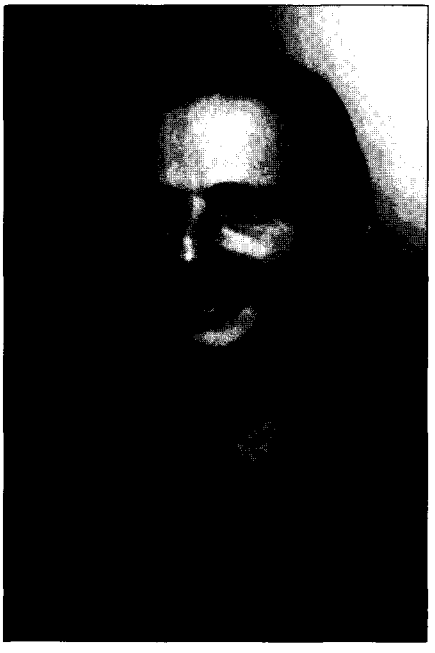

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and DeVito contort Hoffa's life to fit Mamet's myth. Hoffa, the movie says, was an ambitious, hard-nosed realist who wanted the best for himself and his fellow truckers against their rapacious employers. With cynical cockiness, he built the Teamsters into a huge and successful union. Along the way, he made friends with the mob and therefore a lot of enemies in the government—but always because he had to make these friends and these enemies, to protect his union and himself. He ended up murdered by the very forces with whom, by necessity, he conspired; and that was his tragedy, the tragedy of a man who (as the movie's advertisements put it) "did what he had to do."

Making a tragic hero out of Jimmy Hoffa takes a little doing; and so Mamet and DeVito's "faction" contains rather a large amount of fiction, including composite characters and made-up situations. (*Hoffa* is more fanciful even than *JFK*.) When dealing with Hoffa's real-life enemies, Mamet, DeVito and company stoop to malicious caricature, most egregiously in the case of Robert Kennedy. He is portrayed exactly as Hoffa envisioned him, as a snotty, spoiled, ambitious punk. ("You little fag," Mamet's Hoffa calls him.)

Sometimes the fictional portions are puzzling as well as deceptive. Even the movie's friendliest reviewers have pointed out the weaknesses of its ending, a concocted account of Hoffa's murder. The killing seems to make no sense, coming when it does; as a mob hit, in particular, the action is ludicrously ill-planned and improbable. But then *Hoffa* alters a great deal about what is known about the events that led up to the union chief's demise.

This final scene is extremely interesting. A close consideration of it suggests that in addition to turning Hoffa into a stock Mamet character, Mamet and DeVito have fulfilled one of Chuckie O'Brien's highest hopes for the film. According to the FBI's reconstruction of Hoffa's disappearance, O'Brien, probably without knowing what was in store, chauffeured some of his hoodlum friends to a stylish suburban restaurant where Hoffa was waiting on an appointment with Anthony "Tony Pro" Provenzano. O'Brien picked up Hoffa to take him to the scheduled meeting; trusting O'Brien, Hoffa got in the car, and was never seen again. *Hoffa* changes the setting to a trucker's greasy spoon, which is more in keeping with Mamet's inner landscape. Bobby Ciaro (a fictionalized character played by DeVito) proudly points out Hoffa in a car to a stranded young trucker who turns out, to Ciaro's horror, to be a hit man. Ciaro's deed appears utterly innocent; he tries to interfere with the murder, and he, too, is cut down.

The resonance between these two accounts is clear: both O'Brien and Ciaro unwittingly deliver Hoffa to his murderers. But in the movie, the action turns on a complete accident, committed by an unswerving loyalist and not a dishonorable dupe. It may all be Mamet and DeVito's clumsy invention out of numerous sources, including whatever story the unsteady O'Brien fed the moviemakers in 1989. But in its final moment, *Hoffa* appears to grant O'Brien absolution, something O'Brien has wanted all these years.

In more obvious ways, the film offers Hoffa absolution as well for his connections to organized crime. Those connections are the keys to any understanding of Hoffa's character, and of his historical significance. Without them, Hoffa probably never would have risen above a few paragraphs in American labor history. Without them, he certainly never would have had a movie made about him.

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

JIMMY HOFFA, LEFT, WITH ANTHONY PROVENZANO

According to the movie version, the young Hoffa, a brash Teamster organizer, found himself in the middle of a strike in which the company was deploying mob-supported scab truckers. If only the union could get the "son-of-a-bitching dagos off our backs," Hoffa mutters, "we might be able to get somewhere." Suddenly two hoods appear on the scene, who force Hoffa into a car with his buddy Ciaro and drive him to the lair of the local capo. While Ciaro serves as translator, the capo (a central-casting, menacing Italian) complains about how the union is cutting into his business, and threatens to beat the organizer within an inch of his life. Hoffa stays amazingly cool and strikes a bargain with the gang leader, thereby saving the strike, and doing his all to help the workingmen against the bosses.

Thereafter Hoffa comes across as an almost passive partner of organized crime, which in turn appears to stand entirely outside the union. The viewers of this film might be forgiven for believing that Hoffa did his best to keep the mob at arm's length. It is the new underworld boss, Dally D'Allesandro (another composite character), who approaches Hoffa and instructs him on how the union's pension funds can be raided for loans to aid mob enterprises in Las Vegas. ("Perfectly legit," says the suave Dally.) Hoffa willingly goes along, satisfied that the pension fund is doing fine with its new investments; when he needs to, he dis-

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patches Ciaro to New York to pick up the Teamsters' share of the profits. A subsequent betrayal, and the survival of a vital piece of evidence, bring the deal to light and send Hoffa and Ciaro to prison. Only after his release years later, during his desperate attempts to regain power, does Hoffa ever appear to have gotten caught up in full-scale gangland mayhem.

Every single frame of this storyline is a lie or a half-truth. The enormity of the deception becomes clearer if we turn from the story that *Hoffa* tells to the actual story of Hoffa. Jimmy Hoffa's initial alliance with the mob came in 1941, and it had nothing to do with a strike. He was, instead, involved in a turf fight with the fledgling Congress of Industrial Organizations, and he needed extra muscle to roust his rivals. As Sloane shows, it was Hoffa, and not the hoods, who initiated the contacts with Detroit's "East Side Crowd," which included "Scarface" Joe Bommarito, and the East Siders then drove the CIO local out of town. From that moment on, organized crime became an everyday part of Hoffa's operation.

Accounts of Hoffa's criminal activity vary. Some say it was bad, others say it was worse. Sloane, a respectful and balanced biographer, still confirms a great deal. Under Hoffa's leadership, shakedown artists and gangsters such as William Presser, Louis "Babe" Triscaro and most notoriously "Tony Pro" Provenzano, a reputed capo in the Genovese crime family, assumed key positions in the Teamsters. For his specialist in personal assignments, Hoffa chose the mob enforcer Barney Baker. One of Hoffa's favored associates was John "Johnny Dio" Dioguardi, a convicted New York City labor extortionist who was also indicted for arranging the blinding (with acid in the face) of the labor reporter Victor Riesel. At different times Hoffa conspired with Dio to take over New York's Teamster activities with bogus "paper" locals and to organize the city's 30,000 taxicab drivers under Dio's control.

Walter Sheridan, Dan Moldea and other experts tell of additional crimes. Back in Detroit, according to Moldea, Hoffa allowed the hoods Jimmy Quasarano and Peter Vitale to set up a phony Teamster local as a front for their local narcotics operations. When, in 1959, the mob unsuccessfully tried to buy off the new Castro government with a fleet of C-74 Globemaster planes, in order to protect its Cuban drug and gambling businesses, Hoffa assented and tried to help. Rumors long abounded that Hoffa had murder con-

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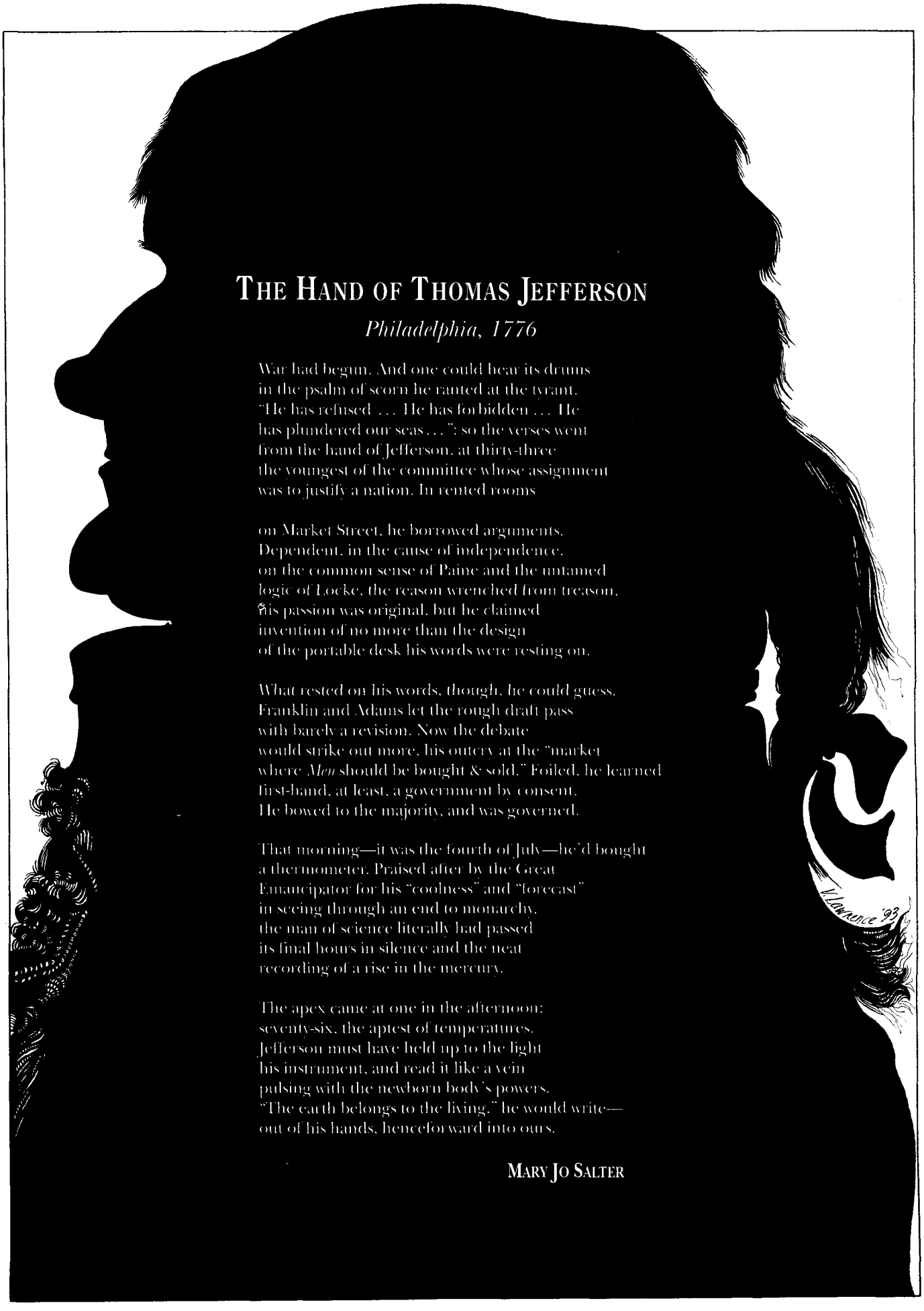

The Hand of Thomas Jefferson

Philadelphia, 1776

War had begun. And one could hear its drums
in the psalm of scorn he ranted at the tyrant.
"He has refused . . . He has forbidden . . . He
has plundered our seas . . .": so the verses went
from the hand of Jefferson, at thirty-three
the youngest of the committee whose assignment
was to justify a nation. In rented rooms

on Market Street, he borrowed arguments.
Dependent, in the cause of independence,
on the common sense of Paine and the untamed
logic of Locke, the reason wrenched from treason.
His passion was original, but he claimed
invention of no more than the design
of the portable desk his words were resting on.

What rested on his words, though, he could guess.
Franklin and Adams let the rough draft pass
with barely a revision. Now the debate
would strike out more, his outcry at the "market
where *Men* should be bought & sold." Foiled, he learned
first-hand, at least, a government by consent.
He bowed to the majority, and was governed.

That morning—it was the fourth of July—he'd bought
a thermometer. Praised after by the Great
Emancipator for his "coolness" and "forecast"
in seeing through an end to monarchy,
the man of science literally had passed
its final hours in silence and the neat
recording of a rise in the mercury.

The apex came at one in the afternoon:
seventy-six, the aptest of temperatures.
Jefferson must have held up to the light
his instrument, and read it like a vein
pulsing with the newborn body's powers.
"The earth belongs to the living," he would write—
out of his hands, henceforward into ours.

Mary Jo Salter

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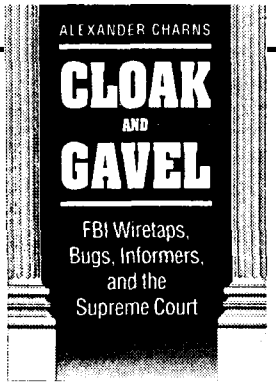
tracts on one or both of his nemeses, John and Robert Kennedy—rumors that only intensified with Hoffa's evident satisfaction at both men's eventual assassinations. (Last year Ragano offered to turn state's evidence to substantiate some of these rumors.)

None of this turns up in *Hoffa*. Neither do the broken bodies of those truckers and union organizers who violated the collusive arrangements worked out between the Teamsters, local truckers' associations and elected public officials. Nor does the kickback money that Hoffa received. A sensationalized sequence about one of Chuckie O'Brien's real-life capers does show Hoffa's men scaring off a newspaper editor who has gotten the goods on one of the Teamsters' scams (though the scam itself, which involved a truck-leasing kickback scheme and a union sellout, is barely explained). Yet we never learn that Hoffa actually escaped conviction for his mob payouts, thanks to a regiment of high-priced lawyers that was headed for a long time by Edward Bennett Williams, a group known around union headquarters as the Teamsters' Bar Association. (Hoffa's eventual convictions were for jury tampering and for conspiracy and mail fraud in connection with the failure of a Florida real estate deal that turns up briefly in the movie.) Instead we see Hoffa as the unterrified working-class realist, taking on all comers with his loyal Ciaro (and occasionally an unnamed attorney) by his side.

At the pinnacle of his power, the real-life Hoffa even picked up a few of the mannerisms of gangster dictators, great and small. The movie, for all of its visual gimmickry, barely portrays them. Hoffa loved to show off his great physical strength, with overtones of violence. In his speeches, and sometimes in private conversation, he habitually referred to himself in the third person, as in his oft-repeated line, "Hoffa can take care of Hoffa." He was also known for a certain kind of gruff (if spurious) candor, which the film actually does convey. When pressed about his reputed gangland associations, he usually made no bones about them, remarking that they were simply a requirement of doing business. He always insisted that he did nothing illegal. "I'm no different than the banks, no different than the insurance companies," he observed in the 1970s, "no different than the politicians."

But he *was* different. All the great builders of America's mass industrial unions—Sidney Hillman of the clothing workers, John L. Lewis of the miners, Walter and Victor Reuther of the auto workers—had to deal with goon squads, mob bosses, rival unions, ferocious employers and unfriendly police forces and judges. Each of them, in his own way, was also a tough guy who displayed physical courage along with Machiavellian realism, which sometimes included the use of thugs. But these men proved tough enough and smart enough to avoid becoming captivated by gangsters, or permitting the underworld to rule and to exploit their membership. The Reuthers in particular showed—in the 1950s and 1960s, when Hoffa snuggled up, for business reasons, to the likes of Richard Nixon—that hard-headed realism need not overwhelm a commitment to larger political ideals, including union democracy. *Hoffa*, however, discourages reflection on any of this, clouding it all over with the mendacious assertion that Hoffa did what he had to do.

Thus the three stories attached to *Hoffa* themselves add up at the very least to a cultural crime: gross falsification disguised as dramatization. And the crime does not end with the movie. HarperCollins should be ashamed of its paperback, *Hoffa*. Its "novelizer" Ken Englade pays tribute to the research librarians who helped him (giving his effort a scholarly air that the movie does not claim). Here and there, Englade does try to make his story conform



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more closely than the movie to the known facts about Hoffa, but not all that often. Englade's postscript disclaimer, that the book includes "several departures from reality," was (as Moldea notes) one of the outstanding understatements of 1992.

Nor is this the first time that Hollywood has bent the truth about the mob-infested Teamsters. Only last fall HBO produced a preposterous "faction" film, *Teamster Boss*, that apologized outrageously for one of Hoffa's successors, the vile Jackie Presser. These portrayals, along with the other "faction" films, typify how history is today falling victim to highly stylized and emotional forms of manufactured ignorance. The American labor movement is currently in difficult shape, and Hollywood, shamelessly manipulating a latent popular sentimentalism about working-class underdogs, has managed to cover up the life of one of the men chiefly responsible for pulling the movement into the mire.

It is especially ironic and outrageous from the standpoint of the Teamsters. Barely a year ago union reformers, after a long and violent struggle, and with the aid of federal prosecutors, finally managed to topple the Teamster national old guard and began to rid themselves of Hoffa's mobster legacy. Their victory is uncertain; the clean-up is far from over. For their troubles, the Teamster reformers now get to see televised propaganda about Presser and a glamorized Hoffa at the shopping mall theaters. It may be a long time before most Americans can begin to think straight about the Teamsters and their history—viewing them not as stylized heavies, but as real people. Thomas Geoghegan, in *Which Side Are You On?*, his witty and insightful memoir of his days as a labor lawyer in the 1980s, sums up the problem as a matter of union kitsch: "Hoffa, the Mob, et al. have made the Teamsters into an icon of pop culture, like Elvis. It is hard to take it seriously."

The mildest thing to be said about *Hoffa* is that it revises the past and turns its subject into yet another unserious icon—Hoffa as another of Mamet's vanishing American Men. Deeper down, however, it looks like the fruit of what began as a more calculated effort to dupe the public about a major figure in American history—and, in the process, to exorcise the demons that surround the late Jimmy Hoffa and Chuckie O'Brien. The fortuitous conjunction of O'Brien, Isgro, Mamet and DeVito accomplished both these aims. No conspiracy could have done it better. •

What is history? An argument for nomadism.

Profile of Clio

By Joseph Brodsky

I never thought it would come to this, to my speaking on history. But as concessions to one's age go, a lecture on the subject appears inevitable. An invitation to deliver it suggests not so much the value of the speaker's views as his perceptible moribundity. "He is history," goes the disparaging remark, referring to a has-been; and it is the proximity of an individual to this status that turns him, sometimes in his own eyes, into a sage. After all, those to whom we owe the very notion of history—the great historians as well as their subjects—are the dead. In other words, the closer one gets to one's future, i.e., to the graveyard, the better one sees the past.

I accept this. The recognition of mortality gives birth to all sorts of insights and qualifiers. History, after all, is one of those nouns that can't do without epithets. Left to its own devices, history stretches from our own childhood all the way back to the fossils. It may stand simultaneously for the past in general, the recorded past, an academic discipline, the quality of the present or the implication of a continuum. Every culture has its own version of antiquity; so does every century; so should, I believe, every individual. Consensus on this noun's definition is therefore unthinkable and, come to think of it, unnecessary. It is always used loosely as an antonym to the present and is defined by the context of discourse. Given my age as well as my métier, I should be interested in those antonyms, in each one of them. At my age and in my line of work, the less palpable a notion, the more absorbing it is.

If we have anything in common with antiquity, it is the prospect of non-being. This alone can engender the study of history, as perhaps it did, because what history is all about is absence, and absence is always recognizable—much more so than presence. Which is to say that our interest in history, normally billed as the quest for a common denominator, for the origins of our ethics, is, in the first place, an eschatological, and therefore anthropomorphic, and therefore narcissistic, affair. This is proved by all sorts of revisionist quarrels and bickerings that abound in this field, thus recalling a model arguing with an artist over her depiction—or a bunch of artists in front of an empty canvas.

Further proof of this is our predilection for reading—and the historians' for producing—the lives of caesars, pharaohs, satraps, kings and queens. These have nothing to do with the common denominator, and often not much to do with ethics either. We go in for this sort of reading because of the central position that we believe we occupy in our own reality, because of the illusion of the individual's paramount consequence. To that one must add that, like biographies, those lives are, stylistically speaking, the last bastions of realism, since in this genre stream-of-consciousness and other avant-garde hopscotch techniques won't do.

The net result is the expression of uncertainty that bedevils every portrait of history. That's what the model fights over with the artist, or the artists among themselves. For the model—let us call her Clio—may think herself, or her agents, more resolute and clear-cut than the way historians paint her. Yet one can understand historians projecting their own ambiguities and subtleties upon their subject: in the light—or rather, the dark—of what awaits them, they don't wish to seem like simpletons. Generally known for their longevity, historians, by showing scruple and doubt, turn their discipline into an insurance policy.

Whether he realizes it or not, the historian's predicament is to be transfixed between two voids: of the past that he ponders and of the future for whose sake he ostensibly does this. For him, the notion of non-being gets doubled. Perhaps the voids even overlap. Unable to handle both, he strives to animate the former, since by definition the past, as a source of personal terror, is more controllable than the future.

His opposite number, then, should be the religious mystic or the theologian.

Joseph Brodsky is the author most recently of *Watermark* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). An earlier version of this essay was recently delivered as the Huizinga Lecture in Leiden.

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Admittedly, the structuring of the afterlife involves a greater degree of rigidity than that of the pre-life. What makes up for this difference, however, is their respective quests for causality, the common denominator, and the ethical consequences of the present—so much so that in a society in which the authority of the Church is in decline, and the authority of philosophy and the state are negligible or nonexistent, it befalls precisely to history to take care of ethical matters.

In the end, of course, the choice that one's eschatological proclivity makes between history and religion is determined by temperament. Yet regardless of the commandments of one's bile, or whether one is retrospective, introspective or prospective, the inalienable aspect of either pursuit is the anxiety of its validity. In this respect, the fondness of all creeds for citing their pedigree and their general reliance on historical sources is particularly worth noting. For, when it comes to the burden of proof, history, unlike religion, has nobody to turn to but itself.

This makes history, I believe, a more dramatic choice. An escape route trying to prove every step of the way that it is an escape route? Perhaps, but we judge the effectiveness of our choices not so much by their results as by their alternatives. The certitude of your existence's discontinuity, the certitude of the void, makes the uncertainties of history a palpable proposition. In fact, the more uncertain it is, the greater its burden of proof, the better it quells your eschatological dread. Frankly, it is easier for an effect to handle the shock of its inconsequence, easier to face the unavoidable void, than the apparent lack of its cause (for instance, when one's progenitors are gone).

Hence that vagueness in the looks of Clio, whether she is decked in ancient or fairly modern garb. Yet it becomes her, not least because of her femininity, which makes her more attractive to the eye than any bearded Pantocrator. It should also be noted that, younger though she is than her sister Urania (who, being the muse of geography, curbs many of history's motions significantly), Clio is still older than *any* being. As large as one's appetite for infinity may be, this is a good match for the life everlasting, should it go in for numerical expression. (What's particularly unpalatable about death is that it negates numbers.)

So it is as Clio's admirer that I stand before you today, not as a connoisseur of her works, let alone as her suitor. Like anyone of my age, I may also claim the status of her witness; but neither by temperament nor métier am I prepared to generalize about her deportment. The métier especially conspires against my expanding on any—particularly any absorbing—subject. It trains one to make one's utterances succinct, sometimes to the point of appearing hermetic and losing either one's audience or, more often, the subject itself. So should you find some of what is to follow too breezy or inconclusive, you'll know whom to blame. It's Euterpe.

Of course, Clio also has a knack for brevity, which she displays in a murder or in an epitaph. Those two genres alone give the lie to Marx's famous adage about history occurring first as tragedy, then as farce. For it is always a different man who gets murdered; it is always a tragedy. Not to mention that once we're employing theatrical terminology, we shouldn't stop at farce: there is also vaudeville, musical, theater of the absurd, soap opera and so on. One should be very careful about metaphors while dealing with history, not only because they often breed either unwarranted cynicism (like the one I just quoted) or groundless enthusiasm, but also because they obscure—almost without exception—the singular nature of every historical occurrence.

For Clio is the Muse of Time, as Auden said, and in time nothing happens twice. Perhaps the most pernicious aspect of that theatrical metaphor is that it ushers into one's mind the sense of being a spectator, of observing from the stalls what transpires on the stage, be it a farce or a tragedy. Even if such a state of affairs were really possible, that in itself would be a tragedy: that of complicity, that is, a tragedy of the ethical kind. The truth is that history does not provide us with distance. It does not distinguish between the stage and the audience, which it often lacks. Murder is almost synonymous with the absence of witnesses. Let me quote Auden's invocation of Clio a bit more fully:

> Clio,
> Muse of Time, but for whose merciful
> silence
> Only the first step would count and that
> Would always be murder . . .

Since everything that happens in time happens only once, we, in order to grasp what has occurred, have to identify with the victim, not with the survivor or the onlooker. As it is, however, history is an art of the onlookers, since the victims' main trait is their silence, because murder renders them speechless. If our poet is referring to the story of Cain and Abel, then history is always Cain's version. The reason for putting this so drastically is to assert the distinction between fact and its interpretation, which we fail to make when we say "history."

This failure leads to our belief that we can learn from history, and that it has a purpose, notably ourselves. For all our fondness for causality and hindsight, this assumption is monstrous, since it justifies many an absence as paving the way to our own presences. Had they not been bumped off, this benefit of hindsight tells us, it would be somebody else sitting here at our table, not exactly ourselves. Our interest in history, in that case, would be plain prurience, tinged perhaps with gratitude.

And perhaps that's exactly what it is, which would put us on a somewhat bland ethical diet; but then we were never morally gluttonous to begin with. The other option is to distinguish between fact and description, treating each historical event as Clio's unique appearance in human quarters, triggered not by our formal logic but by her own arbitrary will. The drawback in this case is that, placing a high premium on rationality and linear thought, we may panic, and either collapse as ethical beings or, more likely, dash for a further Cartesian rigidity.

None of this is desirable or satisfactory. To accept history as a rational process governed by graspable laws is impossible, because it is often too murderous. To regard it as an irrational force of incomprehensible purpose and appetite is equally unacceptable, and for the same reason: it acts on our species. A target cannot accept a bullet.

Characteristically, the voice of our instinct for self-preservation comes out as a cry: What are we to tell our young? Because we are the products of linear thought, we believe that history, whether it is a rational process or an irrational force, is to dog the future. Linear thinking, to be sure, is a tool of the instinct for self-preservation; and in the conflict between this instinct and our eschatological predilection, it is the former that always wins. It is a Pyrrhic victory, but what matters is the battle itself, and our notion of the future amounts to an extension of our own present. For we know that every bullet flies in from the future, which, in order to arrive, has to wipe out the obstacle of the present. That's what our notion of history is for, that's why interpretation is preferred to fact, that's why the irrational version is always dismissed.

It is hard to argue with an instinct; in fact, it is futile. If indeed we care so much about what we tell the young, the following should be done. First, we should define history as either a sum-

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mary of known events or their interpretations. In all likelihood, we'll settle for the latter, since every event's name is itself an interpretation. Since interpretations are unavoidable, the second step should be the publication of a chronological canon of world history, in which every event would be supplied with a minimum number of interpretations—say, conservative, Marxist, Freudian, structuralist. This may result in an unwieldy encyclopedia, but the young about whom we worry will at least be provided with a multiple choice.

Apart from enabling them to think more enterprisingly, such a canon will render Clio more stereoscopic, and thus more easily recognizable in a crowd or a drawing room. For portraits in profile, three-quarters or even full face (down to the last pore, in the manner of the Annales school) invariably obscure what one may hold behind one's back. This sort of thing lowers one's guard, and this is how history usually finds us: with our guard down.

The main attraction of such a canon is that it would convey to the young the atemporal and arrhythmic nature of Clio. The Muse of Time cannot, by definition, be held hostage to our homemade chronology. It's quite possible that from time's own point of view the murder of Caesar and World War II occurred simultaneously, in reverse order or not at all. By throwing many interpretations at any given event simultaneously, we may not hit the jackpot, but we will develop a better grasp of the slot machine itself. The cumulative effect of using such a canon may have peculiar consequences for our psyche; but it surely will improve our defenses, not to mention our metaphysics.

Every discourse on history's meaning, laws, principles and whatnot is but an attempt to domesticate time, a quest for predictability. This is paradoxical, because history nearly always takes us by surprise. Come to think of it, predictability is precisely what precedes a shock. Given the toll it normally takes, a shock can be regarded as a sort of bill one pays for predictability. The benefit of hindsight waxing metaphysical will explain this preference as an echo of time's own tick-tock monotony. Regrettably, time has also a tendency to sound shrill, and all we've got to echo that with is mass graves.

In this sense, the more one learns history, the more liable one is to repeat its mistakes. It's not that many a Napoleon wants to emulate Alexander the Great; it's just that rationality of discourse implies the rationality of its subject. While the former may be possible, the latter is not. The net result of this sort of thing is self-deception, which is fine and absorbing for a historian but is often lethal for at least a part of his audience. The case of the German Jews is a good example.

Let me repeat: whenever history makes her move, she catches us unawares. And since the general purpose of every society is the safety of all its members, it must first postulate the total arbitrariness of history, and the limited value of any recorded negative experience. Secondly, it must postulate that, although all its institutions will strive to obtain the greatest measure of safety for all its members, this very quest for stability and security effectively turns society into a sitting duck. And thirdly, that it would therefore be prudent for society as a whole, as for its members individually, to develop patterns of motional irregularity (ranging from erratic foreign policy to mobile habitats and shifting residences) to make it difficult for a physical enemy or a metaphysical enemy to take aim. If you don't wish to be a target, you've got to move. "Scatter," said the Almighty to his chosen people, and at least for a while they did.

One of the greater historical fallacies that I absorbed with my high school ink was the idea that man evolved from a nomad to a settler. Such a notion, echoing rather nicely both the intent of the authoritarian state and the realm's own highly pronounced agrarian make-up, immobilizes one completely. For nailing one down, it is second only to the physical comforts of a city dweller, whose brainchild this notion actually is (and so is the bulk of historical, social and political theories of the last two centuries: they are all the products of city boys, all essentially urban constructs).

Let us not go overboard: it is obvious that, for a human animal, settled existence is preferable and, given our growing numbers, inevitable. Yet it is quite possible to imagine a settled man hitting the road when his settlement gets sacked by invaders or destroyed by an earthquake, or when he hears the voice of his God promising him a different place. It is equally possible to imagine him doing so when he detects danger. (Isn't God's promise an articulation of a danger?) And so a settled man gets moving, becomes a nomad.

It is easier for him to do this if his mind is not stamped all over with evolutionary and historical taboos; and as far as we know the ancient historians, to their great credit, produced none. Becoming a nomad again, a man could think of himself as imitating history, since history, in his eyes, was herself a nomad. With the advent of Christian monotheism, however, history had to get

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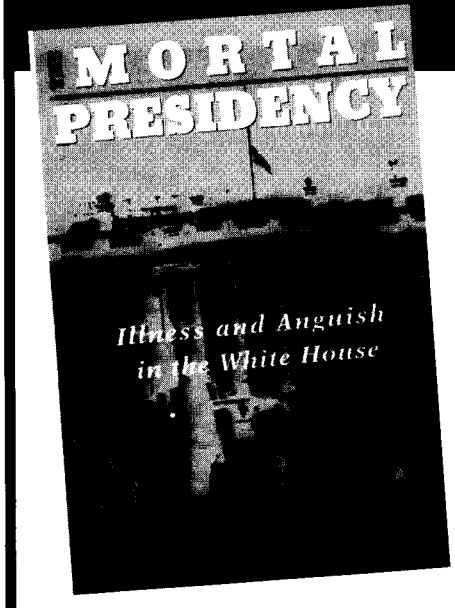

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civilized, which it did. In fact, it became a branch of Christianity itself, which is, after all, a creed of community. It even allowed itself to be subdivided into B.C. and A.D., turning the chronology of the B.C. period into a countdown, as though those who lived then were subtracting their age from birth.

I'd like to add here—because I may not have another opportunity—that one of the saddest things that ever transpired in the course of our civilization was the confrontation between Greco-Roman polytheism and Christian monotheism, and its known outcome. Neither intellectually nor spiritually was this confrontation really necessary. Man's metaphysical capacity is substantial enough to allow for the creeds' coexistence, not to mention fusion. The case of Julian the Apostate is a good example, and so is the case of the Byzantine poets of the first five centuries A.D. Poets on the whole provide the best proof of the compatibility, because the centrifugal force of verse often takes them well beyond the confines of either doctrine, and sometimes beyond both. Were the polytheism of the Greeks and Romans and the monotheism of the Christians really that incompatible? Was it necessary to throw out of the window so much of B.C.'s intellectual achievement? (To facilitate the Renaissance later?) Why did what could have been an addition become an alternative? Could it be true that the God of Love could not stomach Euripides or Theocritus, and if He couldn't, then what kind of stomach did He have? Or was it really, to use the modern parlance, all about power, about taking over the pagan temples to show who was in charge?

Perhaps. But the pagans, though defeated, had in their pantheon a muse of history, thereby demonstrating a better grasp of its divinity than their victors. I am afraid that there is no similar figure, no comparable reach, in the entire well-charted passage from Sin to Redemption. I am afraid that the fate of the polytheistic notion of time at the hands of Christian monotheism was the first leg of humanity's flight from a sense of the arbitrariness of existence into the trap of historical determinism. And I am afraid that it is precisely this universalism in hindsight that reveals the reductive nature of monotheism—reductive by definition.

> That we've broken their statues,
> that we've driven them out of their temples,
> doesn't mean at all that the gods are dead....

So wrote a Greek poet, Constantine Cavafy, 2,000 years after—let's think of

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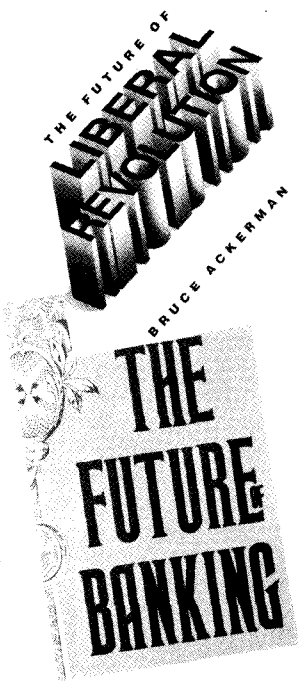

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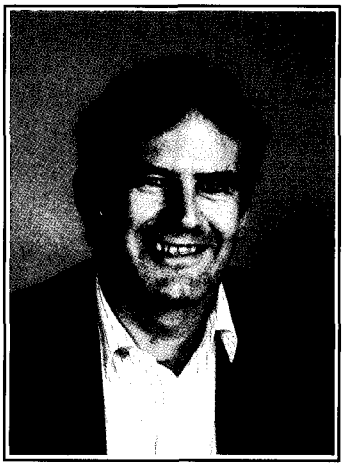

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the young in this room!—the reduction of history from stereo to mono. And let us hope that he is right.

And yet even before history got secularized—in order to become merely scientific—the damage was done: the upper hand that was gained by historical determinism in the course of those 2,000 years gripped the modern conscience tightly and, it seemed, irreversibly. The distinction between time and chronology was lost: first by historians, then by their audience. One can't blame either of them, since the new creed, having grabbed the places of pagan worship, shanghaied time's metaphysics, too. And here I must go back to where I sidetracked myself with my own aside, to nomads and settlers.

"Scatter," said God to His chosen people; and for a long time they did. That was actually the second time he spoke to them about moving. Both times they obeyed, albeit reluctantly. The first time, they had been on the road for forty years; the second time, it took them a bit longer and, in a manner of speaking, they are still in progress. The drawback of being in progress for so long is that you start to believe in progress: if not in your own, then in history's. It is about the latter that I'd like to comment here, on one of its recent examples; but first I must issue a few disclaimers.

The historical literature about the fate of Jews in this century is vast, and one cannot hope to add anything qualitatively new to it. What prompts the following remarks is precisely the abundance of that history, not its want. More pointedly, the reason for these remarks is a few books on the subject that recently came my way. They all deal with the whats and the whys of the wrong that was done to the Jews by the Third Reich; and they are all written by professional historians. Like many books before them, they are rich in information and hypothesis; moreover, like many that will no doubt come after them, they are stronger on objectivity than on passion. This, one should hope, expresses the authors' professionalism as historians rather than the distance from these events accorded to the authors by their own age. Objectivity, of course, is the motto of every historian, and that's why passion is normally ruled out—since, as the saying goes, it blinds.

One wonders, however, whether a passionate response, in such a context, wouldn't amount to a greater human objectivity. Moreover, one wonders whether in such a context the absence of passion is nothing but a stylistic device to which writers resort in order to emulate the historian or, for that matter, the modern cultural stereotype, a cool, thin-lipped, soft-spoken character inhabiting the silver screen for the better part of the century in a sleuthing or slaying capacity. If that's the case—and all too often the imitation is too convincing to feel otherwise—then history, which used to be the source of ethical education in society, has indeed come full circle.

In the end, however, these idols of the silver screen pull the trigger. A modern historian doesn't do anything of the sort, and he would cite science as the explanation for his reserve. In other words, the quest for objectivity of interpretation takes precedence over the sentiments caused by what is interpreted. One wonders, then, what is the significance of interpretation: Is history simply an instrument for measuring how far we can remove ourselves from events, a sort of anti-thermometer? And does it exist independently, or only insofar as historians come and go, i.e., solely for their sake?

I'd rather let these questions hang for a while; otherwise I'll never get through with my disclaimers, let alone with what they are meant to precede. To begin with, I'd like to point out that the following remarks are in no way motivated by my identification with the victims. Of course, I am a Jew: by birth, by blood, but not—alas, perhaps—by upbringing. That would be enough for a sense of affinity, except that I was born when they, those Jews, were dying, and I was not very cognizant of their fate until quite late into my teens, being pretty much absorbed by what was happening to my race, and to many others, in my own country, which had just defeated Germany, losing in the process some 20 million of its own. In other words, I had plenty to identify with as it was.

Now, I mention this not because I have caught the bug of historical objectivity. On the contrary, I speak from a position of strong subjectivity. As a matter of fact, I wish it were greater, since for me what happened to the Jews in the Third Reich is not history: their annihilation overlapped with the burgeoning of my existence. I enjoyed the dubious comfort of being a witless babe, bubbling sweet bubbles while they were going up in smoke in the crematoria and the gas chambers of what is known these days as Eastern or Central Europe, but what I and some friends of mine still regard as Western Asia. I am also cognizant that, had it not been for those 20 million dead Russians, I could have identified with the Jewish victims of the Third Reich in more ways than one.

So if I sometimes peruse books on this subject, I do it largely for egotistical reasons: to get a more stereoscopic picture of what amounts to my life, of the world in which I found myself a half-century ago. Because of the close, indeed overlapping parallelism of the German and Soviet political systems, and because the penal iconography of the latter is rather scarce, I stare at the piles of corpses in my life's background with, I believe, a double intensity. How, I ask myself, did they get there?

The answer is breathtakingly simple: because they were there. In order to become a victim, one ought to be present at the scene of the crime. In order to be present at the scene of the crime, one ought either to disbelieve in its probability or to be unable or unwilling to flee the premises. Of the three, it is the last, I'm afraid, that played the major role.

The origins of this unwillingness to move are worth pondering. This has been done many times over, yet less than the origins of the crime. This is so partly because the origins of the crime appear, to historians, to be an easier proposition. It is all ascribed to German anti-Semitism, whose lineage is habitually traced, with varying degrees of enterprise, to Wagner, Luther and further down to Erasmus, the Middle Ages and generally to the Jews versus gentiles business. Some historians are prepared to take their audience all the way back to dark Teutonic urges, straight into Valhalla. Others are content with the aftermath of World War I, the Peace of Versailles and Jewish "usury" against the backdrop of Germany's economic collapse. Still others lump all these things together, adding at times an interesting wrinkle, such as linking the virulence of the Nazi's anti-Jewish propaganda, rich in vermin imagery and references to Jewish hygienic habits, to the history of epidemics and their relatively small toll among the Jews in comparison to the main ethnic stock.

They are Lamarckians, these historians; they are not Darwinists. They appear to believe that affiliation to a creed can be passed on genetically (thus approximating one of Judaism's main tenets), that the same goes for attendant prejudices, intellectual patterns and so on. They are biological determinists moonlighting as historians. Hence a straight line out of Valhalla into the bunker.

Had the line been that straight, however, the bunker could have been averted. The history of a nation, like the history of an individual, consists more of what's forgotten than of what's remembered. As a process, history is not so much an accretion as a loss: otherwise we wouldn't need historians in the first

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place. Not to mention that the ability to retain doesn't translate itself into the ability to predict. Whenever this is done—by a philosopher or a political thinker—the translation almost invariably turns into a blueprint for a new society. The rise, the crescendo and the fall of the Third Reich, as much as those of the Communist system in Russia, was not averted precisely because it was not expected.

The question is, can the translation be blamed for the quality of the original? The answer, I am tempted to say, is yes; and let me succumb to this temptation. Both the German and the Russian versions of socialism sprang from the same late nineteenth-century philosophical root, which used the shelves of the British Museum for fuel and Darwinian thought for a model. (Hence their subsequent confrontation, which wasn't a battle between good and evil but a clash of two demons—a family feud, if you will.)

An earlier fertilizer, of course, was the splendid French showing in the eighteenth century, which kept the Germans flat on their back militarily and intellectually long enough to develop a national inferiority complex, which took the form of German nationalism and the idea of German *Kultur*. With its incoherence of elevation, German Romantic idealism, initially a *cri de coeur*, pretty soon turned into a *cri de guerre*, especially during the Industrial Revolution, since the British were better at it.

Consider then Russia, which had even less to show for itself than Germany, and not only in the eighteenth century. It was a case of an inferiority complex squared, since it proceeded to emulate Germany in every conceivable—no, available—manner, producing along the way its own Slavophiles and the notion of a specifically Russian soul, as though the Almighty distributed souls geographically. To put it cutely, the *cri de coeur* and the *cri de guerre* merged in the Russian ear into *le dernier cri*; and it was out of an inferiority complex, out of provincialism—always keen on the latest—that Lenin set out to read Marx, not out of a perceived necessity. Capitalism in Russia, after all, was just raising its first smokestacks; the country was predominantly agrarian.

But then you can hardly reproach either one of them for not reading other philosophers—say, Vico. The mental pattern of the epoch was linear, sequential, evolutionary. One falls into that pattern unwittingly, tracing a crime to its origins rather than to its purpose. Yeah, we are that kind of hound: we would rather sniff out ethics than demography. The real paradox of history is that its linear pattern, a product of the self-preservation instinct, dulls this very instinct. Be that as it may, however, both the German and the Russian versions of socialism were informed by precisely this pattern, by the principle of historical determinism echoing, after a fashion, the quest for The Just City.

Literally so, one must add. For the chief trait of the historical determinist is his disdain for the peasantry, and the setting of his sights on the working class. (That is why in Russia they still refuse to decollectivize agriculture, putting—literally, again—the cart before the horse.) A byproduct of the Industrial Revolution, the socialist idea was essentially an urban construct, generated by deracinated minds that identified society with the city. Small wonder, then, that this brainchild of mental lumpen, maturing with an enviable logic into the authoritarian state, amplified the basest properties of the urban lower middle class, anti-Semitism first of all.

This had little to do with the religious or cultural histories of Germany or Russia, which couldn't be more different. For all the vehemence of Luther's rhetoric, I honestly doubt that his largely illiterate audience bothered much about the substance of his ecclesiastical distinctions; and as for Russia, Ivan the Terrible in his correspondence with the runaway Prince Kurbsky proudly and sincerely proclaimed himself a Jew and Russia, Israel. (On the whole, had religious matters really been the root of modern anti-

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Semitism, its ugliest head would have been not German, but Italian, Spanish or French.) And so for German revolutionary thought of the nineteenth century, no matter how wildly it oscillated on the subject of the Jewish expulsion or Jewish emancipation, the legal result, in 1871, was the latter.

Now, first and foremost, what happened to the Jews in the Third Reich had to do with the creation of a brand-new state, a new social and existential order. The 1,000-year-long Reich had a distinctly millenarian, fin-de-siècle ring to it—a bit premature, perhaps, since the siècle was only the nineteenth. But postwar Germany's political and economic rubble was a time as good as any for starting from scratch. (And history, as we remarked, doesn't set much store by human chronology.) Hence the emphasis on youth, the cult of the young body, the purity-of-the-race spiel. Social utopianism meets blond bestia.

The offspring of such an encounter, naturally, was social bestiality. For nothing could be less utopian than an Orthodox—or even an emancipated and secularized—Jew; and nothing could be less blond. One way to build something new is to raze the old, and the New Germany was that sort of project. The atheistic, future-bound, 1,000-year-long-Reich couldn't regard 3,000-year-old Judaism as anything but an obstacle and an enemy. Chronologically, ethically and aesthetically, anti-Semitism just came in handy; the aim was larger than the means—larger, I am tempted to add, than the targets. The aim was nothing less than history, nothing less than remaking the world in Germany's image; and the means were political. Presumably their concreteness, as well as that of their targets, was what made the aim less abstract. For an idea, the attraction of its victim lies in the latter's helping it to acquire mortal features.

The question is, why didn't they run? They didn't run because, firstly, the dilemma of exodus versus assimilation was not new, and fairly recently, only a few generations before, in 1871, it seemed to have been solved by the emancipation laws. Secondly, because the Weimar Republic's constitution was still binding and the air of its freedoms was still in their lungs, as well as in their pockets. Thirdly, because the Nazis at the time could be regarded as an understandable discomfort, as a party of reconstruction, and their anti-Semitic outbursts as a byproduct of its hardship, of its straining muscle. After all, they were the National Socialist Workers Party, and the swastika-clutching eagle could be seen as a provisional phoenix. Any one of these three reasons taken separately would be sufficient not to flee the premises; but the inertia of assimilation, of integration, lumped them all together. The general idea, I imagine, was to huddle together and wait until it all blew over.

But history is not a force of nature, if only because its toll is usually much higher. Correspondingly, one can take out no insurance policy against history. Even the apprehensiveness of a people with a long record of persecution turned out to be a lousy premium: its funds were insufficient, at least for a Deutschebank. The claim submitted by both the doctrine of historical determinism and by the creed-sponsored mental climate of providence's general benevolence could be settled only in human flesh. Historical determinism translated itself into a determination of extermination; and the notion of Providence's general benevolence, into a patient waiting for a storm trooper. Wouldn't it have been better to benefit less from civilization and become a nomad?

The dead would say yes, though one can't be certain. The living will certainly cry, no! The ethical ambiguity of the latter response could be glossed over, were it not based on the false perception that what happened in the Third Reich was unique. It wasn't. What took twelve years in Germany lasted for seventy in Russia, and the toll—in Jews and non-Jews—was almost exactly five times higher. With a little industry, one may presumably establish the same ratio for revolutionary China, Cambodia, Iran, Uganda and so on: the ethnicity of human loss makes no difference. But if one is loath to continue with this line of reasoning, it is because the similarity is too obvious for one's liking, and because it is too easy to commit the common methodological error of promoting this similarity to the rank of admissible evidence for a subsequent law.

The only law of history is chance. The more ordered the life of a society or an individual, the more chance gets elbowed out. The longer this goes on, the greater the accumulation of disfranchised chance, and the likelier, one would think, that chance will claim its own. One should not attribute a human property to an abstract idea, but "Remember that the fire and the ice / Are never more than one step away / From a temperate city; it is / But a moment to either," said the poet, and we must heed this warning, now that the temperate city has grown too big.

As the spelling out of the laws of history goes, this one is the closest. And if history is to be admitted into the ranks of science, which it craves, it should be aware of the nature of its inquiry. The truth about things, should it exist, is likely to have a very dark side. Given the humans' status as newcomers, i.e., given the world's precedence, the truth about things is bound to be unhuman. Thus any inquiry into that truth amounts to a solipsistic exercise, varying only in intensity and industry. In this sense, scientific findings (not to mention the language to which they resort) that point toward human inconsequence are closer to that truth than the conclusions of modern historians. Perhaps the invention of the atom bomb is closer to it than the invention of penicillin. Perhaps the same applies to any state-sponsored form of bestiality, particularly to wars and genocidal policies, as well as to spontaneous national and revolutionary movements. Without such awareness, history will remain a meaningless safari for historians of theological bent or theologians with historical proclivities, ascribing to their trophies a human likeness and a divine purpose. But humanity of inquiry is not likely to render its subject human.

The best reason for being a nomad is not the fresh air, but the escape from the rationalist theory of society based on the rationalist interpretation of history, since the rationalist approach to either is a blithely idealistic flight from human intuition. A nineteenth-century philosopher could afford it. You can't. If one can't become a nomad physically, one should at least become one mentally. You can't save your skin, but you can try for your mind. One should read history the way one reads novels: for the story, for the characters, for the setting. In short, for its diversity.

In our minds we do not usually hook up Fabrizio del Dongo and Raskolnikov, David Copperfield and Natasha Rostova, Jean Valjean and Clelia Conti, though they belong to roughly the same period of the same century. We don't do this because they are not related; and neither are centuries, except perhaps dynastically. History is essentially a vast library filled with books on various subjects in various styles. (Thinking of history in a larger manner is pregnant with our own self-aggrandizement; with readers billing themselves as authors.) Cataloging these volumes, let alone trying to link them to one another, can be done only at the expense of reading them; in other words, at the expense of our own wits.

Besides, we read these novels erratically; when they come our way, or vice versa. We are guided in this activity by our tastes as much as by the circumstances of our leisure. Which is to say, we are nomads in our reading. The same

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should apply to history. We should simply keep in mind that linear thinking, while it is de rigueur for the historian's trade—a narrative device, a trope—is, for his audience, a trap. It is awful to fall into the trap individually, but it is a catastrophe when it happens collectively.

An individual, a nomadic individual especially, is more on the lookout for danger than the collectivity. The former can turn 360 degrees, but the latter can look only in one direction. One of the greatest joys of a nomad, of an individualist, is in structuring history in one's own personal fashion—in cobbling one's own antiquity, one's own Middle Ages or Renaissance in a chronological or achronological, wholly idiosyncratic order: in making them one's own. That is really the only way to inhabit the centuries.

We should remember that rationalism's greatest casualty was individualism. We should be careful with the supposedly dispassionate objectivity of our historians. For objectivity does not mean indifference, nor does it mean an alternative to subjectivity. It is, rather, the sum total of subjectivities. As murderers, victims or bystanders, men in the final analysis always act individually, subjectively; and they and their deeds should be judged likewise.

This robs us of a certitude, of course, but the less of that the better. Uncertainty keeps an individual on guard, and is generally less bloodthirsty. Of course, all too often, it makes him agonize. But it is better to agonize than to organize. On the whole, uncertainty is more true to life itself, the only certain thing about which is that we are present in it. Again, the main trait of history, and of the future, is our absence, and one cannot be certain of something one was never a part of.

Hence that vague look on the face of the Muse of Time. It is because so many eyes have stared at her with uncertainty. Also because she has seen so much energy and commotion, whose true end only she knows. And ultimately, because she knows that had she stared back openly, she would have rendered her suitors blind, and she is not without vanity. It is partly owing to this vanity, but mainly to the fact that she has nowhere else in this world to go, that on occasion, with that vague look on her face, she walks into our midst and makes us absent. •

The Father of Spin Control

BY GORDON S. WOOD

For King and Country: The Maturing of George Washington, 1748–1760 by Thomas A. Lewis

(HarperCollins, 203 pp., $27.50)

Patriarch: George Washington and the New American Nation by Richard Norton Smith

(Houghton Mifflin, 424 pp., $24.95)

George Washington is a hard man to get to know. Despite repeated attempts to humanize him, beginning with Parson Weems's efforts in 1800 to demonstrate that the young Washington could cut down cherry trees but never tell a lie, he remains to this day, as historians like to say, more a monument than a man. Even his contemporaries came to realize that he was not an ordinary, accessible human being. In 1783 Ezra Stiles, president of Yale, could scarcely restrain his desire to deify the man. "O Washington," he exclaimed. "How I do love thy name! How have I often adored and blessed thy God, for creating and forming thee, the great ornament of human kind!"

And so it went: with every passing year he became less and less a real person. By the early nineteenth century he had already become an impenetrable statue and, as Emerson said of every hero, "a bore at last." "Did anyone ever see Washington nude?" Hawthorne asked. "It is inconceivable." Washington "was born with his clothes on, and hair powdered, and made a stately bow on his first appearance in the world." By the middle

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of the nineteenth century, the eulogies of Washington had become so conventional and prevalent that a humorist like Artemus Ward could not resist parodying them: "G. Washington was about the best man this world ever set eyes on.... He never slopt over!... He luved his country dearly. He wasn't after the spiles. He was a human angil in a 3 kornered hat and knee britches."

If even the genteel nineteenth century found Washington inaccessible and insufferable, one can imagine the problems of historians and others trying to depict Washington in our own postmodern and postheroic age, saturated as it is in self-conscious irony, in which absolutely nothing (let alone heroes) can be taken at face value. How can anyone today say anything serious about Washington, that most earnest, unapproachable and unironic of characters? No wonder historians are careful to preface their works by announcing that they are going to rescue the human Washington who has been hidden beneath a mass of monuments and grim-faced portraits by Gilbert Stuart. They can scarcely entertain the notion that what they see represented in the marble monuments and the Stuart portraits—a stern and remote classical figure—is the real man.

So Thomas A. Lewis opens his study of Washington's youth by announcing that he hopes to "break through the marble to the flesh." He has chosen to write about Washington's life in Virginia before he became canonized by the nation, because in those early years he was most human and most "like us." In Washington's life it was a time of failure, of conniving, of self-interested ambition, of rejection by men and women of good judgment. Such weaknesses, says Lewis, do not diminish the high achievements of Washington's life or the enduring quality of his character. But they do "bring such a life as his within our reach."

In a similar manner Richard Norton Smith explains why he has focused his book on Washington's presidency. The hero, he writes, "has become so shrouded in legend that it is difficult to retrieve the man behind the marble exterior." If Washington's human side is to be recovered at all, Smith believes that it can best be done by concentrating on his final troubled years as president and in retirement. The 1790s saw Washington ravaged by time and factious politics, and worn down by his increasing apprehension and disillusionment over the future of the country. It was a time, says Smith, when "to modern eyes" Washington "appears most human because most vulnerable."

It is true, as Lewis says, that Washington's formative years, before he became an international hero, were marked by many failures and weaknesses. In the 1750s no one could have predicted that the young officer in the Virginia militia would emerge as one of the greatest men of his age. Washington was born in 1732, the third youngest son of a successful but not dominant Virginia planter. His initial prospects were not all that promising, and they seemed even less so after his father died when Washington was only 11. But the patronage of the Fairfax family, the premature death of his older half-brother and the midcentury wars with the French and the Indians gave him opportunities, and his driving ambition did the rest.

Even by 1759, however, he had by no means become a great man. "He had spent five years," writes Lewis, "in pursuit of military success and a King's commission, had achieved neither and had turned his back on both." Still, by the end of 1759 he had inherited Mount Vernon, married a wealthy widow named Martha Custis and become a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses. Most importantly, despite all his military failures during the Seven Years' War—"his first armed engagement [the ambush of Jumonville] had been called murder; his second and third [his surrender at Fort Necessity and his involvement in Braddock's expedition] had been bloody and humiliating defeats; now his fourth [his mistaken skirmish with George Mercer's Virginians in 1758] had been fratricidal"—Washington emerged from the fighting with his military reputation intact. Indeed, although he was not to engage in military matters again for seventeen years, he retained his reputation as the colonial officer with the most experience under fire.

Lewis recounts the story of these turbulent years of Washington's maturing with extraordinary narrative skill. His account is realistic and tough-minded, his pace is fast and energetic, his tone is detached and ironic without being cynical. He opens his story with a brief description of Washington's impending meeting with the French forces encamped on the shores of Lake Erie in December 1753. But before revealing what happened in this wilderness confrontation between the British and French empires, Lewis fills in the background of his story—detailing Washington's insatiable desire for land and a royal commission, his contempt for the Indians and the fog of ignorance that surrounded all the English's dealings with the Native Americans, and the problems of the French and their extended lines—all the while deftly holding the reader in suspense by repeatedly foreshadowing Washington's mission and the subsequent events that would touch off a world war.

Lewis ends his story of Washington's life in 1760, when the young man was only 28, still presumably ambitious, self-serving and land-hungry. Indeed, despite his subtitle and suggestions that Washington in 1760 was much more American than he had been in 1748, Lewis never really explains how the clumsy and impetuous officer of the French and Indian War could become the mature and astute military leader of 1775. But nobody else has either. As Don Higginbotham has recently pointed out, most Washington scholars simply "see a marvelous transformation having taken place by the time of the Revolution."

Smith avoids the problem by beginning his story in 1789 with Washington's presidency. Smith's book is also a narrative history, longer and fuller than Lewis's, but by no means as skillfully written. Indeed, Smith has packed a great deal into his account, and thus his narrative line is often confusing and hard to follow, even for a reader well acquainted with the period. For an innocent reader, for someone who does not already know, for example, what the issue of the federal assumption of state debts was about, the story is apt to become unintelligible. Smith recounts Washington's life chronologically, almost as Washington experienced it, and consequently he tends to juxtapose and to mingle many different events, public and private; some are barely alluded to, and others often are never fully worked out or explained in one place.

Thus an incomplete description of Washington's indecision about standing for a second term is interrupted by discussions of his aversion to sitting for portraits and of his handling of his niece's education, which is then followed by a brief account of Jefferson's mounting opposition to the direction of the national administration, ending with elusive references to Hamilton's affair with Mrs. Reynolds and the threat of Hamilton's exposing "Jefferson's youthful attempt to throw himself upon the wife of his best friend, until recently a United States senator from Virginia." Still, all the anecdotes, all the stories of the period are here in Smith's book, from Benjamin Rush's excessive bleeding of yellow fever victims to Anne Bingham's elaborate dinner parties; and out of all the detail an interesting portrait of Washington as "the fulcrum of American security and nationhood" does emerge.

Although both these books present

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ample pictures of Washington at particular times in his life, they cannot, even when read together, offer a complete understanding of the man. By avoiding the Washington of the revolutionary era, neither book can ever fully explain why Washington came to be one of the most celebrated men of his age. Lewis makes clear that Washington's career as a colonial militia officer in the Seven Years' War was anything but notable, and Smith shows that Washington's presidency, for all its successes and its strengths, was scarcely the source of his fame; indeed, he had to bear with a degree of scurrility that makes our present-day press seem tame by comparison.

Washington came to the presidency in 1789 with a worldwide reputation for greatness already established. That is, in fact, one of the reasons that he was so reluctant to assume the office of president. The desire for fame was what Hamilton called "the ruling passion of the noblest minds." Fame was what the Founding Fathers were after, Washington above all. Washington had become famous sooner and in greater degree than any of his contemporaries. And, having naturally achieved what his fellow Revolutionaries still anxiously sought, he was reluctant to risk it by failing as president.

The source of Washington's fame was not his military exploits in the Revolution. They were important, of course, in helping to make his reputation, but Washington was not really a traditional military hero. He did not resemble Alexander, Caesar, Cromwell or Marlborough; his military achievements were nothing compared with those of which Napoleon would soon boast. Washington had no smashing, stunning victories. He was not a military genius, and his tactical and strategic maneuvers were not the sort that awed men. It was not Cornwallis's surrender of the British army at Yorktown in 1781 that made him famous. It was, rather, Washington's surrender of his sword to Congress, and his retirement to his farm at Mount Vernon in 1783, that really electrified the world.

It was extraordinary, unprecedented in modern times: a victorious general surrendering his arms and returning to his farm. Cromwell, William of Orange, Marlborough: all had sought political rewards commensurate with their military achievements. After Yorktown, Cornwallis simply assumed that Washington would be granted great political offices. It was widely thought that Washington could have become king or dictator, but he wanted nothing of the kind. He was sincere in his desire for all the soldiers "to return to our Private Stations in the bosom of a free, peaceful and happy Country," and everyone recognized his sincerity. It filled them with awe. Washington's retirement, said the painter John Trumbull, writing from London in 1784, "excites the astonishment and admiration of this part of the world. Tis a Conduct so novel, so unconceivable to People, who, far from giving up powers they possess, are willing to convulse the empire to acquire more." King George III supposedly predicted that if Washington retired from public life and returned to his farm, "he will be the greatest man in the world."

Washington was not naive. He was well aware of the effect that his resignation would have. He was trying to live up to the age's image of a classical disinterested patriot who devotes his life to his country, and he knew at once that he had acquired instant fame as a modern Cincinnatus. His reputation in the 1780s as a great classical hero was international, and it was virtually unrivaled. Benjamin Franklin was his only competitor, but Franklin's greatness still lay in his being a scientist, not a man of public affairs. Washington was a living embodiment of all the classical republican virtue that the age was eagerly striving to recover. As Fisher Ames observed, he "changed mankind's ideas of political greatness."

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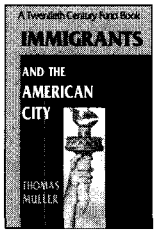

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Despite his outward modesty, Washington never forgot that he was an extraordinary man, and he was not ashamed of it. He lived in an era in which distinctions of rank were still accepted—indeed, celebrated. He had no desire to be taken for an ordinary person, for what he called "a broomstick." He took for granted the differences between himself and the "common herd," and when he could not take those differences for granted he cultivated them. He used his natural reticence to reinforce the image of a stern and forbidding classical hero. His aloofness was notorious, and he worked at it. When Gilbert Stuart had difficulty in putting Washington at ease during a sitting for a portrait, in exasperation he finally pleaded, "Now sir you must let me forget that you are General Washington and that I am Stuart, the painter." Washington's reply chilled the air: "Mr. Stuart need *never* feel the need of forgetting who he is *or* who General Washington is." It is not surprising that the portraits look the way they do.

Many of Washington's actions after 1783 can be understood only in terms of his deep concern for his reputation as a virtuous Cincinnatus-like hero. He was constantly on guard, and very sensitive to criticism. (Jefferson said that no one was more sensitive.) He judged all his actions by what people might think of them. This sometimes makes him seem silly to modern minds, but not to the minds of the eighteenth century. They understood the importance of honor and reputation.

Because he had promised his countrymen in 1783 that he would retire permanently to his farm, Washington suffered great anguish over whether to attend the Philadelphia Convention in 1787. Many believed that his presence was necessary for the effectiveness of the Convention, but the situation was tricky. He wrote to friends imploring them to tell him "confidentially what the public expectation is on this head, that is, whether I will or ought to be there?" How would his presence be seen, how would his motives be viewed? If he attended, would he be thought to have violated his pledge to withdraw from public life? But if he did not attend, would his staying away be thought to be a "dereliction to Republicanism"? Should he squander his reputation on something that might not work?

What if the Convention should fail? The delegates would have to return home "chagrined at their ill success and disappointment. This would be a disagreeable circumstance for any one of them to be in; but more particularly so for a person in my situation." Even Madison had second thoughts about the possibility of misusing an asset as precious as Washington's reputation. What finally convinced Washington to attend the Convention was the fear that people might think he wanted the federal government to fail so that he could then manage a military takeover. So in the end he decided, as Madison put it, "to forsake the honorable retreat to which he had retired and risk the reputation he had so deservedly acquired." No action could be more virtuous. "Secure as he was in his fame," wrote Henry Knox with some awe, "he has again committed it to the mercy of events. Nothing but the critical situation of his country would have induced him to so hazardous a conduct."

After the Constitution was established, Washington still believed he could retire to the domestic tranquillity of Mount Vernon. But everyone else expected that he would become president of the new national government. Indeed, the Convention had made the new chief executive so strong, so kinglike, precisely because the delegates expected Washington to be the first president. Once again this widespread expectation aroused all his old anxieties about his reputation. He had promised the country that he would permanently retire from public life. How could he now assume the presidency without being "changeable with levity and inconsistency; if not with rashness and ambition?" His protests were sincere. He had so much to lose and so little to gain. But he did not want to appear "too solicitous for reputation." He was certain, he told his friend Henry Lee, "whensoever I shall be convinced the good of my country requires my reputation to put at risque; regard for my own fame will not come in competition with an object of so much magnitude."

But Washington could not continue to pose the issue starkly in this way as one between duty and reputation. For the more he thought about it, the more accepting and not accepting the presidency became matters of reputation, especially after Hamilton suggested to him that there might be "greater hazard to that fame, which must be and ought to be dear to you, in refusing your future aid to the system than in affording it." It was not easy to make decisions when a concern for one's virtue was viewed as unvirtuous. Nothing could make him abandon his retirement, Washington told Benjamin Lincoln in 1788, "unless it be a *conviction* that the partiality of my Countrymen had made my services absolutely necessary, joined to a *fear* that my refusal might induce a belief that I preferred the conservation of my own repu-

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tation and private ease, to the good of my Country."

Washington's apparent egotism and his excessive coyness, his extreme reluctance to get involved in public affairs and to endanger his reputation, have not usually been well received by historians. Douglas Southall Freeman, his great biographer, thought that Washington in the late 1780s was "too zealously attentive to his prestige, his reputation and his popularity—too much the self-conscious national hero and too little the daring patriot." Some historians might not understand his behavior, but his contemporaries certainly did. They rarely doubted that Washington was trying always to act in a disinterested way. His anxious queries about how this or that would look to the world, his hesitations about serving or not serving, his expressions of scruples and qualms—all were part of his strenuous effort to live up to the classical idea of a virtuous leader. He seemed to epitomize public virtue. Even if John Adams was not all that impressed with George Washington, Abigail Adams was certainly taken with him. She admired his restraint and trusted him. "If he was not really one of the best-intentioned men in the world," she wrote, "he might be a very dangerous one." As Garry Wills has nicely put it, Washington gained his power by his readiness to relinquish it.

As in the case of his career as commander in chief, Washington's most important act as president was his giving up of the office. The significance of his retirement from the presidency is easy for us to overlook, but his contemporaries knew what it meant. Most people assumed that Washington might be president as long as he lived, that he would be a kind of elective monarch, something not out of the question in the eighteenth century and indeed in much of the world today. Hence his persistent efforts to retire from the presidency enhanced his moral authority and helped to fix the republican character of the Constitution.

He very much wanted to retire in 1792, but his advisers and his friends felt otherwise. Madison admitted that when he had first urged Washington to accept the presidency, he told him that he could protect himself from accusations of overweening ambition by "a voluntary return to private life as soon as the state of the Government would permit." But the state of the government, said Madison in 1792, was not yet secure. Washington sought to discover what others thought, and everywhere the answer was the same: he must stay on. Hamilton even tried the ultimate argument, that retirement when he was needed would be "critically hazardous to your own reputation."

But it was left to a female friend, to Eliza Powel, to develop this point and to hammer it home. If Washington followed his inclinations and retired from the presidency, she wrote, his enemies would attack his reputation. They would say "that ambition has been the moving spring of all your acts," and that now, when the going was tough and his fame could not be enhanced, he "would take no further risks" for the people. How to preserve one's reputation without at the same time allowing concern for that reputation to overcome one's duty was a peculiar dilemma of the eighteenth century. Washington stayed on for another term.

In 1796, however, he was so determined to retire that no one could dissuade him, and his voluntary leaving of the office set a precedent that was not broken until Franklin Roosevelt secured a third term in 1940. Washington's action in 1796 was of great significance. That the chief executive of a state should willingly relinquish his office was an object lesson in republicanism at a time when the republican experiment throughout the Atlantic world was very much in doubt.

Washington's final years in retirement were not happy ones. The American political world was changing, and Washington struggled to comprehend it. In July 1799, in the last year of his life, Governor Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut, with the backing of many others, urged Washington once again to stand for the presidency in 1800. Only Washington, Trumbull said, could save the country from "a French president," that is, from Jefferson. Finally Washington had had enough. In his reply he no longer bothered with references to his reputation for disinterestedness and his desire to play the role of Cincinnatus. Instead he talked about the new political conditions that made his candidacy irrelevant. In this new democratic era of party politics, he said, "personal influence," distinctions of character, no longer mattered. If the members of either party "set up a broomstick" as candidate and called it "a true son of Liberty" or "a Democrat" or "any other epithet that will suit their purpose," it still would "command their votes in toto!" Party spirit now ruled all, and people voted only for their party candidate. Even if he were the candidate of the Federalist Party, he was "thoroughly convinced I should not draw a single vote from the anti-federal side." Therefore his standing for election made no sense; he would "stand upon no stronger ground than any other

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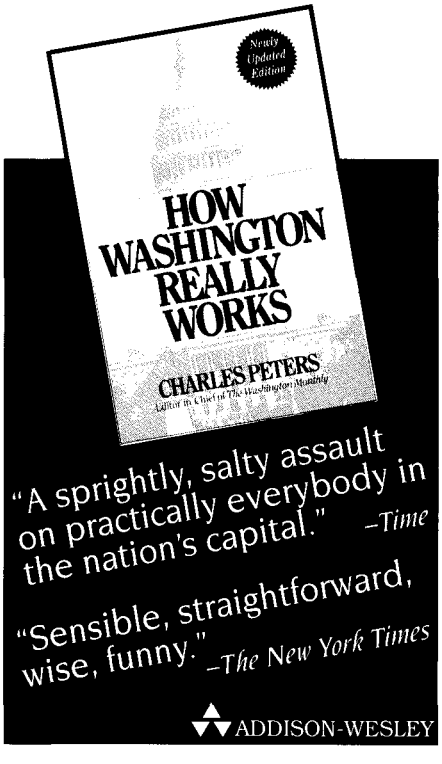
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Federal character well supported."

Washington wrote all this in anger and despair. He exaggerated, but he was essentially right. The political world was changing, becoming democratic, and soon parties, not great men, would become the objects of contention. To be sure, Americans have continued to long for heroes as leaders, and from Jackson through Eisenhower we have periodically elected a Washington manqué to the presidency. But democracy made such great heroes no longer essential to the workings of American government. And Washington, more than any other individual, was the one who made that democracy possible. As Jefferson put it, "The moderation and virtue of a single character ... probably prevented this revolution from being closed, as most others have been, by a subversion of that liberty it was intended to establish." That is why Washington remains, and must remain, a great American hero.

GORDON S. WOOD is University Professor and professor of history at Brown University. He is the author most recently of *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (Knopf).

Color and Caution

BY ALEX KOZINSKI

The Color-Blind Constitution by Andrew Kull

(Harvard University Press, 301 pp., $35)

"That the Constitution is color-blind is our dedicated belief."
—Plaintiffs' brief in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* (1954)

"The position that 'our Constitution is color-blind' has never been adopted by this Court."
—Justice Brennan, concurring in part in *Regents* v. *Bakke* (1977)

There's something profoundly appealing about the colorblindness principle. The notion that the government must treat people the same regardless of race is one of those simple ideas that can move mountains. For more than a century—from before the Civil War to the mid-1960s—the civil rights movement was largely devoted to this cause, and a fair measure of the movement's success was doubtless based on the moral force it commands. Well-meaning people of all political stripes, who might not agree on what the laws of the land ought to be, could nonetheless agree the laws should be equal for all races.

But colorblindness is also a most inconvenient idea. Taken seriously, it gets in the way of doing any number of things government might think wise and prudent: separate schools and preferential minority admissions; segregated streetcars and minority business set-asides; anti-miscegenation laws and racial gerrymandering. It is perhaps for that reason that the Supreme Court has never adopted colorblindness as an operative constitutional principle. Unwilling to foreclose the political branches (under its own supervision) from doing what they think necessary to ameliorate racial tensions, the Court has firmly rejected every suggestion that the law may never discriminate on the basis of race.

The colorblindness principle has nonetheless maintained a firm grip on our collective consciousness. The most obvious reason for this is moral: there's something inherently repugnant about judging people by their skin color. Partly it's because it seems wrong to punish or reward people for something over which they have no control. Partly it's because race is almost never relevant to a person's suitability for anything. Partly it's that the very ethic of individualism demands that we treat people as individuals, not as members of a group. From Justice John Marshall Harlan's "the law regards man as man, and takes no account of his color" in his 1896 *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* dissent, to Dr. King's dream that people "not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," colorblindness has carried a strong moral appeal.

Despite its intuitive power, this argument has its difficulties. We often do reward people on the basis of immutable characteristics: the smart, the beautiful, the talented usually beat out the stupid, ugly and dull. We also regularly make judgments about people because of the group to which they belong—for instance, we prohibit all 20-year-olds from buying alcohol because a few of them abuse it. Even as our moral sense tells us people are entitled to be treated as individuals, experience and expedience tell us that group judgments are often rational.

A second argument for colorblindness is political. Unlike intelligence, age or appearance, race and ethnicity are deeply divisive things. People draw lines based on these attributes, dividing the world into us and them. From the former Yugoslavia to Sri Lanka to Canada to South Africa, we see how easy, lasting and deadly the divisions can be. And, as Thomas Sowell demonstrated in *Preferential Policies*, government-enforced racial discrimination tends to exacerbate these tensions. In Harlan's words, colorblindness is the only "sure guarantee of the peace and security of each race," a means to put an end to the "conflict of races, the continuance of which must do harm to all concerned."

But this argument, too, has its limitations. Racial classifications might fuel racial hostility, but not making such classifications might fuel even more hostility. We live in a society only a generation or so removed from apartheid; racism is still a fact of life for many Americans. Blacks continue to share unequally in the bounty of our economy, quite likely because they continue to suffer the effects of discrimination visited on them and their ancestors. If we are going to achieve racial peace, and eventually a colorblind society, some have argued, we must adopt color-conscious remedies.

But there's a third argument for colorblindness, one that carries less emotional power yet may ultimately be the strongest. It's a profoundly pessimistic argument, an argument based on suspicion and mistrust. It contends that, where race is concerned, we cannot leave judgments of morality or prudence to legislatures, even to courts. It looks in large part to the past, to our sorry record of race-based decisions—enforced segregation, anti-miscegenation laws, the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II—and of judicial approvals of all these decisions. But it also looks to the future, to a society where racial conflicts are rapidly progressing beyond the paradigm of whites oppressing blacks; to a society in which many racial and ethnic groups have economic and political power and the willingness to use it to benefit themselves at the expense of others.

Andrew Kull's *The Color-Blind Constitution* is a work of intellectual history. It is a history of the idea of colorblindness, of its evolution from before the Civil War, through the days of Jim Crow and *Brown*

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v. *Board of Education*, to the present. It's a fascinating story, tightly written and often surprising. Few people know, for instance, about the first school desegregation lawsuit, filed in Boston more than 100 years before *Brown* and more than a decade before the Civil War. Few know how much force the colorblindness argument carried even in the dark days of separate but equal: in the decades before and after its *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* decision upholding segregated streetcars, the Supreme Court struck down many racist laws, from laws barring blacks from juries to those enforcing residential segregation. In the years immediately after the Civil War, state courts in Iowa, Kansas and Pennsylvania struck down school segregation laws. (The Kansas decision, as it happens, did not last; the segregationist Board of Education in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* was that of Topeka, Kansas.)

Being a work of history, Kull's book is primarily an objective summary of the past, rather than a blueprint for the future. But, as Kull admits, telling the story of race-based legislation supplies powerful ammunition for the colorblindness cause. Rather than dealing directly with the morality or the political wisdom of affirmative action, Kull's book casts into doubt the ability of legislators and judges to resolve these moral and political questions.

The willingness of the *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* Supreme Court to acquiesce in government-ordered segregation is one part of the story. This was not a Court too timid to stand up to state officials in matters of race: it had no difficulty striking down discriminatory jury service laws, racist business-licensing practices, residential segregation laws and the like. The Court simply decided that streetcar segregation was reasonable and therefore permissible. If people think that "the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority," wrote a smug Justice Henry Brown, "it is solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it." Today we condemn this way of thinking as wrong, and segregation as deeply unfair and unreasonable. But so long as courts have the power to determine which race-based laws are reasonable and which are not, we live with the risk that they'll make the wrong decision.

The Japanese-American wartime internment cases are another part of the story. Politicians from Earl Warren to Franklin Roosevelt supported internment, and six of the nine Supreme Court justices agreed. Perhaps the Court was only yielding to political necessity. Perhaps it was concerned that a decision many would see as undermining the war effort could badly damage the Court's authority. But the three dissenters, who doubtless had their share of political savvy—Justice Frank Murphy had been a mayor and a governor, as well as attorney general; Justice Owen Roberts is widely believed to have voted to uphold New Deal legislation in order to stave off Roosevelt's court-packing plan—must have thought otherwise. And, as Justice Robert Jackson pointed out, the Court went beyond approving of discrimination in time of war; its holding that "pressing public necessity" could justify race discrimination remained "a loaded weapon" usable in peacetime. Maybe courts will always hesitate to overturn governmental decisions made in the face of overwhelming necessity. But a court that views racial classifications as permissible if sufficiently justified will be much quicker to uphold invidious classifications than one that aspires to a rule of absolute colorblindness.

Finally, Kull aptly points to the little-known case of *United Jewish Organizations* v. *Carey* (1977), in which the Supreme Court upheld a racial gerrymander that eviscerated the voting power of Brooklyn's 30,000 Hasidic Jews in order to increase the electoral strength of black and Puerto Rican communities. Hasidic Jews, as Kull points out, are "one of the most discrete and insular minorities it is possible to imagine," and anti-Semitism in America is not exactly ancient history. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court serenely rejected their claim, noting that "whites in Kings County, as a group, were provided with fair representation," something akin to telling Puerto Ricans that they shouldn't worry about their voting strength because "Catholics as a group were provided with fair representation." This may not be an evil as great as segregation or the internment of Japanese-Americans, but it's profoundly troubling nonetheless: in the zero-sum game of racial redistricting, the ethnic group that got squeezed out was the one with its own long and painful history of oppression.

The most powerful reason, however, for pessimism about the ability of courts and legislatures to tell good racial classifications from bad is one that Kull only hints at, because it's rooted in the likely future more than in the historical past. One argument—a very plausible argument—in favor of affirmative action has been its likely motivation: while laws passed by whites that hurt blacks may seem motivated by hatred or prejudice, laws passed by whites that help blacks seem much more benign. One can question the political wisdom of such laws, or argue that they're morally wrong, but it seems more reasonable to defer to legislative judgments when they are motivated by altruism rather than self-interest.

But in large part thanks to the success of the civil rights movement, we're entering an era in which economic and political power is much more widely shared among races and ethnic groups. Chinese-Americans and Japanese-Americans are richer on average than whites (though they tend to be too dispersed to form electoral majorities). Cuban-Americans are the dominant political force in parts of Florida. And both blacks and Hispanics, despite their relative lack of economic power, form electoral majorities in many regions. Blacks, for instance, were a majority on the city council of Richmond, which enacted the racial preferences challenged in *Richmond* v. *J. A. Croson Co.* (1989); Mexican-Americans are a majority in many cities and counties in the Southwest.

It's an unpleasant but incontrovertible truth that all ethnic groups—from Anglo-Saxons to Italians to Irish to Jews—tend to help their own at the expense of others. Much of this is based on a feeling of identification with fellow group members and, ultimately, on raw economic self-interest: economic solidarity among people of the same ethnic background is a time-honored tradition. Nor are minorities immune from racism and prejudice; though one would hope that a consciousness of past oppression would teach empathy and tolerance, this has often not been so. White immigrant groups who were subject to vicious per-

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secution in the Old World have had no compunctions about doing unto others as was done unto them.

We truly are not all that different from each other, warts and all. It would be improbably saintly for groups with newly acquired power to forbear from using it for their own ends. In a non-colorblind legal system, courts will have to deal with more and more color-conscious laws that may have more and more suspect motivations.

It's far from clear how courts can do this in any principled way. No one has yet proposed a satisfactory rule that distinguishes proper racial classifications—permissible exercises of the government's power to classify people for the common good—from those based on hatred, prejudice or a desire to help one's own at the expense of others. No one has explained how we can tell justified attempts to compensate for past wrongs apart from unjustified attempts to get the biggest slice of the pie. And the alternative to rules—making ad hoc intuitive decisions, as the Court has been doing recently—seems like a good solution only if you are the one appointing the judges.

Were racial discrimination always irrational, colorblindness wouldn't be very controversial. But there are times when the argument for color-consciousness is plausible; imposing colorblindness in those cases seems an extravagance. If our elected representatives really believe that interning Japanese-Americans may help win the war, or allocating university admissions by race may help produce a more just society, or reserving jury seats for each race may help avoid riots, why should an abstract principle stand in the way?

The answer to this question depends on whether you're an optimist or a pessimist. If you believe the branches of government, working together, can implement only (or mostly) the good race classifications and reject the bad ones, colorblindness will be at most an aspiration, a principle to be generally followed but scuttled when necessary. But if you're skeptical about the competence of lawmakers and judges in this area, you will choose colorblindness as a nearly ironclad prophylactic rule, to be breached only at great peril. Justice Harlan, whose brilliant dissent in *Plessy* gave us the phrase "colorblind," was a pessimist. "The experience of the intervening century," Kull contends, "has not yet proven Harlan wrong."

ALEX KOZINSKI is a federal judge in California.

Denis the Menace

BY EUGEN WEBER

Diderot: A Critical Biography
by P. N. Furbank
(Knopf, 524 pp., $30)

This Is Not a Story and Other Stories
by Denis Diderot
translated with an introduction by P. N. Furbank
(University of Missouri Press, 166 pp., $27.50)

Langres, where Denis Diderot was born in 1713, shortly before the death of Louis XIV, floats high above the chalky plains of east Champagne, a cold, windy, not very welcoming town, whose chief industries 200 years ago were cutlery and the Church. Diderot's father was a master cutler: the men of the family had been artisans or taken holy orders as far back as memory wished to press. A brilliant student of the Jesuits, young Denis tried the former craft and found it too demanding, flirted with the latter but found it too constricting. In Paris, where he had gone to continue learning, he learned too much, fell into bad ways, lost his vocation, abandoned his studies, began to hang about cafés where other dissipated youths played chess (that's how he met Rousseau, another addict), chased skirts and ended up marrying one.

Marriage meant children, even though most of them died: of his four, only the last girl survived. He had to earn some money to keep the meager home, the fragile children, the wife who nagged about his wayward ways: "a grumbler and a scold," her fond daughter called her when defending her from worse charges. He scrabbled as other contemporary bohemians scrabbled, by hack journalism, sermon writing, confidence trickery and making ill-paid translations from English. "There is no need," he remarked at a later stage, "to understand a language to translate it, since one translates it only for people who understand it not."

In 1746, with Denis in his 30s, the bookseller-publishers he worked with thought of a larger project: translating the Scotsman Ephraim Chambers's groundbreaking *Cyclopaedia*. Diderot came cheap, and in this sphere he could be relied on. But he began to feel his oats; translation became creation. He would direct an encyclopedia of his own, bring in a distinguished mathematician, Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, as co-editor, recruit friends and acquaintances—Rousseau, Condillac, Montesquieu, Voltaire and others less well known—to contribute articles. The son of an artisan, he would take responsibility for writing or commissioning articles on the arts, and on the crafts also then regarded as arts, whose underrated social and economic importance would be demonstrated by the scale of attention devoted to them.

The epigraph to the *Encyclopaedia* refers to "the power of order and connection." Its contents, ranged in an alphabetical order not then taken for granted, so that *Theology* came after *Technology*, affirmed democracy over traditional hierarchies; and cross references suggested sardonic connections ("*Anthropophagy*: see *Eucharist, Communion, Altar, etc.*"). Gastronomical articles on *Asparagus, Almond* and so on were lifted wholesale from a popular recipe book. Denounced, they were eventually dropped after the third volume. But that lay in the future. In 1751 the first volume of the work, covering the letter A, appeared to much acclaim. Two thousand, then 4,000, subscribers guaranteed the success of the series. By 1765, when the seventeenth volume of text appeared (the eleven volumes of plates took longer), the monument contained 60,660 articles.

Incoherent, uneven in the quality of its articles, unsettling in its juxtapositions, exciting in its subversions, the *Encyclopaedia* was to become the major war machine of that party of humanity whose militants were, like Diderot and his friends, "philosophers." As with other parties, this one's message, when listened to in detail, sounds like cacophony. Its core, however, was simple: it was time for a secular, more democratic world to replace a hierarchical, religious one. Nature was to replace anthropomorphic God. Nature came

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first and within Nature, Man came first, a social animal, perfectible, and self-perfectible by the application of Reason. To philosophers, says P. N. Furbank in his splendid book, "Reason was what Grace is to the Christian." Which meant that thought had to range freely. Furbank does not quote Diderot's quip that "original sin might be no more than an original way of sinning." Flippancy of this sort helps explain why right-thinking folk in what was still a Christian society looked on the *philosophes* as libertines, and why booksellers included pornography among their "philosophic books."

Some *philosophes* would have reversed the image. It was not their writings that were (or were about) harlotry, a social menace; the Great Whore was the Church, its rule, pornocracy. Most members of the philosophical clan, among them the skeptic and atheist Diderot, were more moderate. Yet all were anticlerical. For enlightened men (and philosophy was by definition enlightened as religion was by definition obscurantist), organized religions, Christianity above all, were enemies of progress, the Church a parasite on society, the chief inspiration and support of despotic rule. Nature was about Liberty. Children of Nature, "Maniacs of Freedom," abhorred slavery and slave drivers. Their hands, as one of Diderot's ballads sang, launching a trickle of quotable imitations, "would knot the guts of priests to strangle kings."

For Diderot, whose younger sister had become a nun and died in a state of religious mania, whose elder brother, a priest, was an intolerant bigot, this seemed a good idea. His religious foes responded in kind, and their powers of enforcement were greater than any that enlightened wordsmiths could have hoped to wield. Diderot's writings were burned by the public hangman. Contributors to the *Encyclopaedia* were hounded, the enterprise banned by the king, prohibited by the pope, condemned by the high court of Parliament ("Is there no justice against men of law?").

Friends urged Diderot to take refuge abroad. He did not, though the royal privilege by which the *Encyclopaedia* was printed and sold in France was rescinded, and volumes only continued to appear at great risk to all involved thanks to the protection of the royal censor and of the chief of police. As absolutism was allegedly limited by satirical ditties, so censorship was mitigated by personal sympathies. Yet freedom remained severely circumscribed, and self-censorship could prove more dire than the official kind. In 1764, on the eve of the work's completion, Diderot found that his editors, fearing the wrath of authority, had bowdlerized and emasculated controversial articles, many his own; behind his back they had removed anything that could cause trouble.

The hard core of philosophical activities was found in a few *salons*. Writing in a dreamier age, Lytton Strachey painted the finely powdered ladies and gentlemen in their silks and jewels at these assemblies of the night. "Within, the candles sparkled, and the diamonds, and the eyes of the company sitting round in gilded, delicate chairs. And then there was supper, and the Marquise was witty, and the Comte was sententious, while yet newer vistas opened of yet happier worlds, dancing on endlessly through the floods of conversation and champagne." The image is not without justification. But for a social group, many of whom like Diderot himself were trammeled by slender budgets and skimpy lodgings, the hospitality of a generous host was crucial on the elementary material level. Dinners, receptions and drawing rooms, open on regular days, offered more than harbor: light from expensive candles enhanced by costly mirrors, lavish food and wine, freedom from dark, dust, dirt, cold hearths and the din of uninsulated quarters.

Salons provided a firm base for the cultural dog fights of the day, and a forum for intense sociability. The *cacouacs*, as a hostile pamphlet dubbed them, lived in each other's laps. In Furbank's pages we find everyone discussing their own affairs and everybody else's affairs as well. With lots of itchy people waiting to be scratched right way or wrong, tiffs between friends were many. Bitter accusations were resolved in floods of tears, hugs, kisses or in deadly feuds like the one that ended Rousseau and Diderot's long friendship. Everyone discussed virtue, friendship, duty, god (or its absence); everyone lavished advice on others. Diderot was good at that, and he enjoyed it. As indiscreet as he was helpful, he could not bear not to tell anyone in range, at length, what was best for them.

He was an energetic talker, physically invasive, grabbing his interlocutors or hugging them, patting, squeezing, slapping, pounding them to emphasize his points. The Empress Catherine reported that, after a conversation (and they had quite a few), her thighs were black and blue from his emphatic smacks. "I've had to put a table between him and me to keep myself and my limbs out of the range of his gesticulation." But he knew himself and he knew his kind. He loved mankind and most of all himself. He also loved their foibles. The typical man of genius, explained *Rameau's Nephew*, "is good at one thing only and perfectly unaware of what it means to be a citizen, a father, mother, brother, relative or friend." In any case, genius or no, "we are never sorry except for ourselves." As for Public Opinion (which Voltaire just then was busy mobilizing to right injustices), it was "a hopeless tribunal, weak, venal and feather-headed, swayed by herd-instinct ... and instant emotion." That being so, prudence was wisdom. We must "speak against insane laws until they are reformed, but in the meantime obey them." Or at least break them cautiously. All thoughts are good to think, not all are good to publish.

That may be why so many of Diderot's writings were published in Holland—like *The Indiscreet Jewels* of 1748, with place of publication variously given as Monomotapa or Peking. Some, like *The Nun* and others that Furbank outlines and discusses, were circulated in samizdat form in his friend Melchior Grimm's *Correspondance littéraire*, a manuscript newsletter dispatched every two weeks by diplomatic channels to a very select list of some fifteen subscribers like the queen (later the king) of Sweden, the king of Poland and the Russian empress. Others, like *Jacques the Fatalist* and *Rameau's Nephew*, were published only after the author's death—sometimes long after.

That also applies to the five short stories or colloquial essays that Furbank has translated—notably "This Is Not a Story" and the "Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage"—in the little book to which the former lends its title. The dialogue mode that Diderot liked to use is sometimes stilted and sometimes less than fascinating; but the narrative moves fast, the wit sparkles, the skepticism is modern. No wonder that the stories were much admired by the likes of Schiller and Balzac, let alone by Goethe, who translated *Rameau's Nephew* into German, so that its first French publication, when it came in 1821, was a garbled translation back from Goethe's German. Like them or not, though, the stories are full of pearls, as when, in Diderot's conversation with his father, the son whispers as he kisses him: "Father, the truth is, there are no laws for the wise man." The father whispers back: "Not so loud."

The father's principle evidently informed the son's practice. But there was a lot of publication all the same. Diderot was fascinated by the theater; he had strong ideas on acting and on the cool detachment that, he believed, made for better acting. "Sensibility makes mediocre actors, extreme sensibility makes hidebound actors, cool thinking makes sublime actors." By way of his effect on Lessing, Furbank holds, Diderot must count as a founding father of German national drama. He was also fascinated by the plas-

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tic arts, wrote art criticism that was widely read in narrow circles ("We laugh at portraits of our ancestors and never think how our nephews will snigger over ours"), recommended his friend Etienne-Maurice Falconet to sculpt the splendid statue that still gestures grandly in St. Petersburg today. He frequented painters, admired Chardin and, equally, Greuze, whose "moral painting" he praised warmly. He called for styles more suggestive than exhaustive: "When we write, must we write all? When we paint, must we paint everything? Please leave something to my imagination." This when discussing a Boucher sheepfold aswarm with the fleecy beasts. He also, as her Paris agent, bought so many important collections for the Empress Catherine that Furbank regards him as "to a considerable degree, the founder of the Hermitage collection."

In 1784, when he was 70 years old, Diderot suffered a stroke. The doctors applied blisters and plied him with emetics. "You use very nasty things to keep me alive," he commented, as we would today. At Catherine's behest, his friend Grimm rented an apartment worthy of humanity's friend in the rue de Richelieu. He did not long enjoy it. He had time to tell his daughter that "the first step toward philosophy is incredulity." At dinner the next day he ate heartily, in his usual way, and died while reaching for the cherry compote.

It is a pity that Furbank annexed *This Is Not a Story* to title his handsome little collection of Diderot's minor but revealing writings. He should have used that as the subtitle of the larger book. It is not really a biography, nor does it quite claim to be one, but a series of wise and knowledgeable disquisitions on aspects of literary activity in eighteenth-century Paris, from the editing of dictionaries to the writing of plays and novels, all set in the context of several lives—Diderot's, of course, but also those of his friends, loves and relations. Diderot is not so much the center of the book as the thread on which Furbank's discourse is strung. And narrative plays second fiddle to analysis—hence the subtitle, "A Critical Biography." Furbank has played fair with his readers and there is nothing wrong with this approach, as long as amateurs of mere biography are warned. This is an excellent *critical* biography.

It is not Furbank's fault if the frequent and copious quotations from his hero's writings, private and public, seem verbose. They did not seem so in Diderot's time, and they offer the flavor of his writing, although not quite the spice. I do demur, however, at the surfeit of quotation marks in the critical passages that recount and discuss Diderot's works. The philosopher, who liked the specificity of real-life names, often pictured his friends and himself in imaginary conversations. He does so, for example, in *D'Alembert's Dream*, to which a chapter of the biography is devoted. Furbank, who gives an excellent account of the fictional debate at that essay's core, quotes the parties as "Diderot" and "D'Alembert," which, as the two men talk, litters the page with little curlicues. More materially, while Diderot's wisdom is well brought out, his wit is less so. The man who observed that love robs some of their wit and bestows it on those who have none does not appear. Nor does the one who asked, "What is more common than to think one's face has two noses, and to deride those who think their arse has two holes?"

But these are quibbles. "That great magician Diderot," as Michelet once called him, has inspired one more worthy monument to keep his memory alive. He bustles out of Furbank's pages, sturdy, sociable, easygoing, playful, greedy, ebullient, vociferous, impetuous, ardent and overflowing. He knows how to coin a phrase. The man of feeling, he says, speaking of actors but thinking quite likely of himself, lacks presence of mind: "He loses his head and only recovers it at the foot of the stairs"—the source of the wonderful French expression *esprit d'escalier*, staircase wit. He knows many facts, and he knows that facts aren't everything. The man who insists that "a single demonstration strikes me more forcibly than a hundred facts" knows about stocking frames and knows about the "earths," gums, calcined bones, crushed stones and metallic limes that then made up the painter's palette. He knows many things that, until his *Encyclopaedia*, many had not thought worth knowing, and he made it possible for others to know them:

> Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night.
> God said "Let Denis be!" and all was light.

Furbank has etched a bourgeois of genius, a middling, sensual man who was yet exceptional. Diderot was cowardly yet brave, constant, perseverant, moderate in tastes, immoderate in intellectual passion, excessive in behavior, sensible in reasoning but incapable of withstanding an idea. Ideas were like women: irresistible. They blew through his head like the winds of Langres, exhilarated him and turned him into stormwind himself, the hurricane that before long blew down the world in which he died.

EUGEN WEBER is the author most recently of *My France: Politics, Culture, Myth* (Harvard University Press).

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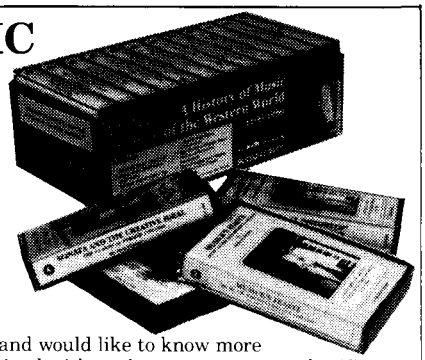

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Covenant and Burling

NO *TEDIUM VITAE* IN THE CAPITAL this week. The torch is being passed. Better the torch be passed than the past be torched, I'm sure; but still this is a fine moment to insist on the limitations of generational analysis. Twentysomething, thirtysomething, fortysomething: Were there ever emptier attributes? The new general descriptions make the old general descriptions look positively individuating. A generation is a singularly paltry prop for an identity, unless you wish to be known for, and have your reasons and your desires explained by, the popular culture to which you surrendered as a child. In this country, generational analysis is largely a series of references to video and vinyl, with the objective of making an audience seem like a community. This suits the entertainment business fine, and it relieves the pundits of anything more strenuous in the way of cultural analysis. Its effect, however, is to deny the most obvious characteristic of every generation, which is diversity. Everyone who admired Napoleon Solo and Country Joe and the Fish is not like everyone else who admired Napoleon Solo and Country Joe and the Fish. Or, to put it more painfully, the first of his generation to find himself in national office was not Bill Clinton or Al Gore, it was Dan Quayle.

THIS INAUGURATION IS A SUCCESsion, but for that reason it is also worth remarking that being next is not the same thing as being young. We, I mean those of us who are more or less the new president's age, are not young anymore; or at least we are not anymore the youngest, which is what seemed to matter the most. Therefore the tone of some of this revelry troubles me. It is self-adoring in the customary way. Having mistaken fun for history, we are now mistaking history for fun. But this is not Yasgur's farm, this is South-Central and Sarajevo; and the ones who will err, if they err, will be us. I know this sounds solemn, but it should also come as a relief. Who wants forever to be promising? Promise is tiresome and time is passing. And it will not hurt us to learn that leaders and teachers are always rattled, and improvising, and anxious for the understanding of those who come after them (that is, after us).

I DO NOT MEAN TO SUGGEST, OF course, that Clinton is lacking in seriousness. The saxophonist-in-chief is positively square in his consecration to public service and its institutions. Sometimes I think that Clinton was not the oldest young person in the campaign, but the youngest old person. (The hellion appears to have no trouble with business as usual; Covenant and Burling, his administration might be called.) His seriousness seems to consist, however, in a combination of ambition and pedantry. There is something spiritually thin about Clinton. Finally his constant talk—at last we have a president who speaks in sentences, but all the time—leaves only an impression of articulateness. Detail has mastered him as much as he has mastered detail. He has the common touch, but it looks a lot like massified networking; and his populism looks like a need for the love of every living American.

THE MOST DISTURBING QUALITY about Clinton, however, is his indifference to contradiction. Not excluding the political middle by not excluding the logical middle: that appears to be the Clinton strategy. And so he can hold in his mind, simultaneously and sincerely, notions that cannot really be held together. The deficit must be reduced, but there must be growth; economic policy will come first, but foreign policy will not come second; the rules about lobbyists will be a light unto the nations, but Ron Brown will be the secretary of commerce; the capital does not understand the country, but (as he told his first meeting with Democratic congressmen) "Washington works better than the country understands"; the persecution of gays in the military must end immediately, but it must end incrementally; the daughter will go to Sidwell Friends, but (in the words of Jean-Paul Belmondo, I mean George Stephanopoulos) "they didn't reject public schools"; and so on. I do not doubt that some of these contradictions denote an admirable attempt to transcend intellectual and political convention. But I suspect that many of them denote a personal inclination toward the deferral of decision. The fear of excluding can then represent itself as a love of including, and make indecision seem like the spirit of inquiry.

IT IS NOT LEADERSHIP TO TELL people what they want to hear. It is leadership to tell people what they do not want to hear, and to give them a reason to listen. I do not doubt that Clinton has a skill for making friends. I hope that he has a skill for making enemies. And I am not referring to Senator Dole. (Anybody can make an enemy of Senator Dole.) The philosophical and political differences within the Democratic Party were not reconciled by Clinton's nomination, they were postponed by the prospect of his victory. But he has won, and they are back. And the truth is that a lot of those differences cannot be reconciled. All the Democrats, new and old, cannot be right. The big tent is good for politics, but it is bad for government.

LAST AND IN WASHINGTON LEAST, culture. It turns out that philistinism is a bipartisan phenomenon. Sensitive souls were shaken a few months ago to learn that Clinton's favorite musician is Kenny G. (His "sax adviser," said the spokesperson in Little Rock; copy editors, stay quick.) Much more discouraging was Clinton's choice of poet for his inauguration. In this respect, certainly, he is no Jack Kennedy. Among all the poets of America, black and white, he chose Maya Angelou, who is sort of a cross between Rod McKuen and Maxine Waters. The other day there arrived in the office a book of "Holocaust Poems," on the back of which I discovered this blurb by Angelou: "*Falling from Heaven* is a painful and poignant offering which reminds me that none of us has survived the Holocaust without scars." Us? This first person plural is not empathy, it is impertinence. I hasten to assure the poet inaugurate that I survived Jim Crow without a scratch. And to thank her, I guess, for reminding me, as William Rehnquist dusts off his Bible and Mick Fleetwood unpacks his drums, that a counterfeit community is worse than no community at all.

LEON WIESELTIER

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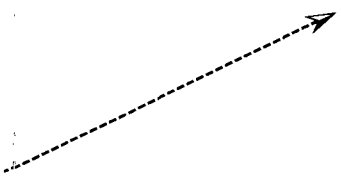

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